THE CONGREGATIONAL MAGAZINE

AND JOURNAL OF THE

CHURCH-AID AND HOME MISSIONARY SOCIETY,

FOR

1885.

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London:

ALEXANDER & SHEPHEARD, 21, CASTLE STREET,
HOLBORN.

MDCCCLXXXV.

Copies of the volume of the Congregational Magazine, for 1885, neatly bound in cloth, can now be had, price 2s. each. Covers for binding the numbers can also be obtained from the Publishers, or through any bookseller.

Alexander & Shepheard, Printers, Lonsdale Buildings, Chancery Lane, W.C.

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ALEXANDER & SHEPHEARD, Printers, Lonsdale Buildings, Chancery Lane, W.C.

THE CONGREGATIONAL MAGAZINE,

1885.

THE REV. THOMAS REES, D.D.

THE name of Dr. Rees is honoured on trust in England; for, being a "Welsh Welshman," he does not often ascend an English pulpit. But his name is honoured indeed throughout the principality; for what spot is there, remote or populous, where his voice has not been heard, and

where his gospel is not loved? He was born near the town of Llandeilo, in Carmarthenshire—a county of preachers—in the month of December, 1815. His early advantages were but scanty and poor. He himself, in making a gratuitous apology for the style of his English in the preface to the first edition of his "History of Protestant Nonconformity in Wales," remarks "that all his knowledge of the English language has been acquired after the twentieth year of his age, without the assistance of any tutor." But, by means of an unswerving application and an unconquered pluck he has made headway with remarkable success; and adds another name to the famous roll of those who have mastered the circumstance, and turned the difficulty into an opportunity.

When thirteen years of age he was admitted into the fellowship of the church at Capel Isaac, a church fragrant with the memories of pioneer Independency in South Wales. Eight years after, in 1836, he was ordained to the pastorate of the church at Craigyfargoed, in Glamorganshire, with a membership of twelve and a salary of ten shillings a month. After labouring there for four years, and at Aberdare for two, and at Llanelly for seven, and at Beaufort for thirteen, he finally settled at Swansea, where he has remained now for over twenty-two years.

He has taken foremost interest in the establishment of English Congregational Churches in South Wales, and has often taken a portion of their debt-burden upon his own shoulder; travelling far and wide to make collections on their behalf.

His literary labours have been considerable. He translated Albert Barnes's "Notes on the New Testament" into Welsh, and published in 1861 a "History of Protestant Nonconformity in Wales," a work of great interest—"the result of my researches for forty years"—a second edition of which, much revised and enlarged, was published in 1883. Another important work of his is a volume of "Notes on the Bible for Families," which has gained a wide circulation among his countrymen. In conjunction with his friend, the Rev. Dr. Thomas, of Liverpool, he edited and wrote a great portion of "The History of the Independent Churches in Wales."

He has more than once done yeoman service for militant Nonconformity in its present aspects in the principality. In his religious teaching he is an Evangelical pure and simple. His theology is charmingly old-fashioned; and his sermon has all the picturesque solemnity of an ancient melody of Wales with a free, wild spirit of joy flashing through its sombre and desolate movements. He is regarded to-day as the patriarch of Welsh Congregationalism; and English Congregationalism has done well to honour him.

HOPE FOR THE NEW YEAR.

"Hold Thou me up, and I shall be safe."—PSALM cxix., 117.

IN these words there is what may be described as an audacity of Faith. God is infinitely great. He is the Creator of the Heavens and the Earth. Every fresh discovery of the extent of the universe, of the immensity of the physical forces which are revealed in its infinitely varied phenomena, of the vastness of those ages during which the universe was moving slowly and painfully to its present majesty and splendour, enlarges our conception of Him. The more we know, the more are we assured that what remains unknown surpasses all our present knowledge.

There are moods in which He seems so august that we feel it is enough for us to see Him afar off, now and then, in moments when our higher-life is exceptionally vigorous and active. For us, this is a sufficient honour; for us, these remote and transient visions are a sufficient blessedness.

In such moods there is something startling in a prayer like this. To appeal to the Infinite and Eternal God, for His support in this brief and obscure life, seems the insanity of presumption. That God should be interested in an individual life—and that life our own,—among all the millions of lives which blend in the great and ever-flowing stream on which His eye is resting; that instead of leaving us to do our best in the conflict with all the perils which surround us, He should take us into His personal care,—this seems the wildest and most daring of hopes that ever excited a fevered brain.

How did it come about that men like the writers of the Jewish Psalms, with just thoughts of God, with humble thoughts of themselves, should have ventured to make such an appeal as this to the divine care, and should have had a deep and settled conviction that such an appeal was consistent with humility, and with reverence? The answer to this question is to be found in the revelation of God of which the record is preserved in the Old Testament.

The Psalms are a decisive proof of the religious value and power of that revelation. They are better than innumerable volumes, rich in learning and keen in argument, in defence of the divine origin of Judaism. They are the response of devout hearts to what God had made known of Himself in Jewish institutions and Jewish history, and show the impressions which these institutions and that history had made upon men.

No doubt God was great. The Jew saw His glory in the splendour of the sun and in the shining heavens, heard His voice in the winds and in the stormy sea, saw in the everlasting hills the mighty monuments of His power; but this same God had made Himself known to Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, had watched over the fortunes of Joseph, had sent Moses to deliver the Jewish race from their slavery in Egypt.

No doubt God was infinitely great; the heavens, even the heaven of heavens, could not contain Him. And yet He had commanded the Jewish people to set up a tent for *Him* among their tents in the

wilderness, and at a later period of their history the tent gave place to a palace in Jerusalem, near the palace of the king. In some wonderful sense God lived among them; He had directed them to build Him a home. And, not by their appointment, but by His, there were priests who were to approach Him as representatives of the people, and there were sacrifices which the priests were directed to offer to Him.

The impression produced by their history and institutions was that God was seeking *them*, not that they were seeking God; if they in their turn had to seek Him it was still true that the first movement came from His side. The firmness of faith, the immovable conviction, the vivid sense of God, which we find in the Psalms, have their solid foundation in these divine revelations. God had spoken first; the Psalmists were only answering Him. They were under the power—not of hopes and aspirations of their own—but of Divine manifestations, which were as real to them as the earth and the sea, as the hatred of their enemies, the love of their children, physical pain and physical delight.

The ancient Jewish histories and institutions still have their use. The story of Abraham and Isaac, Jacob and Joseph, Moses and Joshua, of Saul, of David, of Solomon, illustrate for ever the same truths concerning God that they illustrated to the ancient saints. The tabernacle, the priesthood, the sacrifices, the civil organization of the elect race, the laws concerning the tenure of land, the sanitary laws—if we are able vividly to imagine the condition and habits of the men who were familiar with them as the actual environment of their lives—may assist us to think of God as the Psalmists thought of Him; may explain how it was that devout men spoke of thirsting for God, called Him their Shepherd, their portion, their strength and their song, their sun and their shield; and how it was that the writer of these words had the courage and the faith to look up to God and to say, "Hold Thou me up, and I shall be safe."

As Christian men we should derive a stronger faith and a firmer courage from the wonderful revelation of God in Christ. We should look away from our own thoughts about God, from our personal character and history, and begin with what God has made known of Himself in the Christian Gospel. The Eternal Son of God has become man; this is the strong foundation of our confidence. He was in the beginning with God, and was God; but He made our nature His own; He lived our life; and the infinite distance which once appeared to separate heaven and earth, God and man, exists no longer.

This is not a dead and formal dogma about which theologians may find it interesting to dispute, but which has no value for common men. It is the final proof that the Creator of all things has an infinite interest in human life. It is an invitation to prayer, a ground of faith, an offer of sympathy, a pledge of support.

The history of the earthly life of our Lord more than fulfils every hope that might have been excited by the bare announcement that

God had became man. Had we known nothing more than this—that in the Lord Jesus Christ God had became man—we might have inferred that, while God had revealed an immense love for the *race*, it would be left for every man to make what he could of the revelation, and that any specific consideration for individuals was still beyond hope. We might have supposed that, as the sunshine is sent to bless all the earth, and the wealth of the soil is made the common inheritance of mankind, so the divine love in the Incarnation must be a wide and general and impersonal blessing.

But no such impression can remain after reading the four Gospels. We are struck at first sight by the care and solicitude that our Lord Jesus Christ manifested for individual men. He preached to crowds, but he was constantly dealing with men and women one by one, and dealing with them according to their individual character, history, and condition. He had one gospel for all, but He varied it, not only for different classes of men, but for each man that came to Him. He talked to Nicodemus in one way; to the woman of Samaria in another. His discourses to the people of Galilee differed from His discourses in the temple. He became the companion of publicans and sinners, and, when His conduct was challenged, defended himself by saying that the shepherd went to seek the solitary sheep that was lost, though there were ninety-and-nine in the fold.

The miracles of Christ give us the same impression in another way of His care for individual men. Nothing, I suppose, makes it so hard for us to believe that God cares for us individually as the invariableness of the order of the material universe. The great physical forces act according to fixed laws, without regard to their disastrous effect on individuals. They never discriminate between innocence and guilt. The storm sweeps across the sea, and the devout and the profane perish together. Disease is in the air, and the good and the evil are smitten down indiscriminately. Famine covers a province, and the just and the unjust die of hunger. The grave remains closed over heroes and saints as well as over the basest of mankind.

The Lord Jesus Christ meets and utterly destroys the impression which these facts naturally produce on the heart and restores the faith which is crushed by them. It may be well that the great forces of the universe should give no heed to the fears and sorrows of those who are menaced by them, should be without pity, and implacable. But Christ stills the storm when His disciples are terrified by it. He feeds thousands in the desert who are faint from want of bread. He meets blind men on the road and gives them sight. He finds a man lying helpless by the pool of Bethesda and tells him to rise and walk. He restores to Jairus his dead daughter; to the widow of Nain her dead son. He weeps over the grave of Lazarus with the broken-hearted sisters of His friend, and then calls Lazarus out of the rocky sepulchre. All these facts, if we have eyes to see the gracious meaning shining through them, are assurances of God's deep and changeless sympathy with individual

men in all the troubles and sorrows of their mortal condition; declarations that, however unrelenting may be the forces of the physical universe, He, who is their Master, regards individual suffering with pity and responds to individual trust.

Still the revelation is incomplete. We might have feared that since *we* have not given God the supreme place in *our* hearts, we could have no place at all in His heart. His words might have failed to reassure us. For if I understand anything of the spiritual life of man, *facts*—not *words*—are the firmest foundation of faith; and in an awful and glorious fact God has met and subdued the last doubt which could have impaired the vigour of our confidence. Christ has died that we might have remission of sin.

The revelation of Immortality adds new strength to our reliance on God's interest in our individual character and history. While we think of human life as bounded by the narrow limits of these mortal years, it is not easy to believe that God can care for individual men. The imagination, if not the reason, is overborne by the contrast between the brevity of our own days and the eternity of the Most High. The race lives on from age to age. He may care for *that*. But how is it possible for Him to care for individual men, who are like the flowers of summer, which blossom for a week, and then pass away? We recover our feet when we see before us an endless existence. The immortal righteousness and glory which we may achieve through Christ are not beneath the notice of the Eternal God. The everlasting future raises our individual life to a new plane, lifts it from earth to heaven. Whether individual men failed or not in this world, if this world were all, might seem a matter of indifference to Him who lives from eternity to eternity; but whether individual men make sure of a life which is to be developed to a nobler and nobler perfection through countless millenniums of power and blessedness, can hardly be a matter of indifference to Him. We may say with a firm and confident faith, "Hold Thou me up and I shall be safe."

As they get older, most men feel more deeply the tragic side of human life. A new year is dark with terror as well as bright with hope. Who can be sure of himself and of his fidelity to God for twelve months? What man has the absolute self-control which would make it impossible for ambition, covetousness, passion, or resentment to revolt against conscience, and to blast in an hour the righteousness of thirty, forty, fifty years? Who is safe from the fierce violence or insidious poison of still baser vices? What we want for our protection is a *Will* outside ourselves—a Will beyond the reach of the wind and storm of temptation and passion, as the stars are beyond the reach of earthly tempests—a Will steadfast in its eternal allegiance to righteousness—a Will with unlimited resources to sustain righteousness in others when their righteousness is sorely tried, and when they themselves in weariness or unwise self-confidence are ceasing to be vigilant and alert—a *Will* on which we can rely to reinforce and reinvigorate our inconstancy, to give us steadiness and fortitude, to shelter us from

temptation when we are in no condition to fight it, to inspire us with strength when the conflict is inevitable. It is to such a Will that we can appeal, and we can appeal to it with a confidence surpassing that of ancient saints; for God has revealed more of Himself to us than He revealed to them. He will listen when we say, "Hold Thou me up, and I shall be safe."

Our Immortality, as it increases the confidence, should also deepen the urgency of our prayer. An accidental injury received in childhood may do nothing for many years to impair our health and strength, or to diminish the effectiveness of life. But at some critical moment in the maturity of our manhood the strain of exertion, or the exhaustion of disease touches us just in the point where the forgotten injury enfeebled us; and our vigour is broken, our work is closed, as the result of the accident which happened to us in our childhood. And I can imagine that a sin, in this the childhood of our history, may have a similar effect on our powers millions of ages hence, may render us incapable of the service and honours of the regal spirits among the redeemed, and relegate us to inferior work and joy.

And it may be—who knows?—that the trouble which came to us last year, but which God gave us grace to bear without impatience, sharp temptation which He gave us strength to subdue—may have prepared us for some higher form of service and of honour, of which we shall know nothing till we have been in heaven for ages. The sorrows, the moral struggles which lie before us now, may have effects as remote and as beneficent. Year after year, the pain, the struggle may yield no apparent fruit; it may seem to have been a mere waste of strength and joy; we may die, and nothing may seem to have come of it; we may be with God through ages which we cannot measure, and nothing may seem to have come of it. And then, with glad surprise, we may discover that the agony which had seemed altogether useless has laid open to us a wider knowledge, made us capable of a loftier service, prepared us for a diviner rapture than could have been ours had we never suffered it. The wasted sorrows and struggles of this life may yield a wonderful harvest in the life to come.

The simplest contents of the Gospel are, perhaps, after all, the surest foundation of our trust. Christ has called us the children of God, and by the power of His Spirit has given us a life which corresponds to our name; for He has drawn us into union with Himself, and in Him the life of God is ours. If the great title means anything, it means that God cares for us—not in the mass, as kings care for their subjects,—but one by one, as fathers care for their children. And so we believe that the thought of God disentangles the intricacies of every man's life, anticipates every man's dangers, knows the possibilities of righteousness and wisdom which every man may achieve on this side of death and on the other, controls the history of every man that trusts Him, so as to secure for him, not exemption from transient temptation and sorrow, but the largest wealth of eternal perfection and joy. R. W. DALE.

CHURCH-AID AND HOME MISSIONARY WORK.

AMONG THE OUTCASTS.

THE night is cold. The damp, foggy air outside is not very inviting. Yet this is the night for which we are pledged to cast in our lot with "the outcasts," or more strictly speaking, with some friends connected with the London Congregational Union, who are seeking out the outcasts, and striving to do them good. What with existing churches, church extension, mission halls, night-work, feeding the hungry, emigration schemes, board school visitations, children's breakfasts, boot distributions, wood-chopping for poor boys, and various other movements, the London Union is certainly doing its share in illustrating "Our Practices," as well as in upholding "Our Principles." To return to our night-work. At half-past ten on Saturday night we leave our own comfortable fireside, and sally forth—

> "Away from the light—into the night
> Of the sadder, darker, outer world."

We have set ourselves to do certain work before joining our friends. We want to see a little of "gay life," in the neighbourhood of Leicester Square, Regent Street, and Piccadilly Circus. This particular line of observation may prove a contrast to our mission work, or it may prove painfully in harmony with it. As we look upon the hundreds of girls and women—once innocent—thronging the thoroughfares, or standing in rows on the kerb-stones, using every imaginable attractive art, and persuasive blandishment in the prosecution of their elected mission, we cannot help envying, by comparison, the lot of the poor tot-gatherer walking by the side of the gutter, who is eagerly picking up the ends of cigars, thrown away by the "fast" men who congregate in the neighbourhood, that thereby he may stay the pangs of hunger. We find material for future action in our brief glance round this region of shameless public traffic in immorality, and having satisfied ourselves by personal observation of the existence of a state of things which we could not otherwise have believed, we proceed to the appointed rendezvous at Hyde Park Corner. At half-past twelve, our force is complete, and our arrangements are quickly made. Some of our number take the north side of Piccadilly, others the south side, and we proceed on our eastward journey. We have scarcely proceeded twenty yards, before we find some of those whom we came to seek. Sitting on the cold stones which support the iron railing in front of the Green Park, we see a man and woman, the very picture of despair. The sharp contrast with the surroundings strikes us very forcibly; Buckingham Palace with its grand, historic associations in the rear; the dwellings of rich bankers and prominent statesmen in front; here in the centre, the extremity of poverty and misery! "Are you going to sit here all night," we ask. The woman sits motionless, her haggard, sunken face tells its own tale. Her dark, piercing eyes seem to be looking into a far-distant world, as if half-hoping

to see, by anticipation, something of the land of rest. The husband replies to our question: "We have nowhere else to go." "Why not go home?" "We have no home." "Can't you work?" "Work! we have been trying to get work all the week, but it's no use. The beginning of the week we tried to get work in London, then we went down to Windsor, and tried there, yesterday and to-day we walked back to London—we are almost starved." "If you care to go to Collier's Rents, near the Borough, here are tickets for breakfast in the morning. The Mission Hall is open now, if you like to go." Like to go! why the very mention of a better resting place, and a free breakfast, seems to give new life to these wearied ones; and off they start, on their walk of five miles, for the comfort of a warm room and a breakfast.

A little further on we meet another homeless one. "Are you looking out for a job?" "I should be very glad of one, sir; I've been looking out long enough." "Would you like to have a good breakfast in the morning?" "Indeed I should, sir." "Well, here is a ticket which will admit you, if you care to walk as far as the Borough." Very heartily the man says, "Thank'ee, sir"; and more quietly adds, "I'll go and tell my missus." "Would your missus like to go too?" "I'm sure she would, sir, if you could spare another." Well, we spare another ticket; and we have the pleasure of looking upon two bright faces instead of one when we meet at breakfast.

We can only note a few of the cases we meet with. We pass a woman sitting in front of the National Gallery, but there is something in her manner which causes us to turn back and speak to her. A few kind words unlock the heart and unloose the tongue. Tears course rapidly down her cheeks as she tells her trouble. Her husband, who has left her for a few minutes, returns hurriedly as he sees us in conversation. The story is a brief one, but none the less sad. This is their first night out. One week behind with their rent, on account of not being able to procure a small sum due to them, they had returned to their "furnished lodging at four shillings per week," only to find the door closed against them. The first experience of a compulsory "night on the streets" is a very sad one, and it is worth all our personal sacrifice to see the transformation in this honest couple, and to hear the cheery tones of the husband as he says, "Come along, Sarah, we are saved for to-night." They have started for the Mission Hall with lighter hearts than they had a few minutes ago. Subsequent inquiries confirmed our impression that the story to which we had listened was a true one, and a few shillings sufficed to give new joy to a hard-working couple by giving them a fresh start in life.

From Trafalgar Square we proceed viâ St. James' Park to Westminster, and along the Embankment to Waterloo Bridge; then we explore the dark arches, and the vans and wagons in the neighbourhood, finding material for reflection and scope for Christian activity in our progress. A couple of elephants and a caged lion which we meet on the Embankment do not come

within the scope of our invitations to breakfast. On we go to Covent Garden, scarcely with the expectation of finding any "cases" there; for Covent Garden is not a scene of activity on Sunday mornings, whatever it may be on other mornings of the week. Yet as we go round the north side, there is something in the bearing and manner of that respectable young man which induces us to pause a little. He is not "whistling loud to keep his courage up," but he is walking aimlessly, apparently with no other object than walking, and this at three o'clock in the morning is somewhat unusual. He does not look like an outcast, still we will venture to speak to him.

"Good morning, my friend—there are not many about here this morning—somewhat different from other mornings."

"Ah, sir," I shouldn't be walking about if I had anywhere to go."

So this respectable-looking man is homeless? Yes; and a little more inquiry elicits the fact that he is without food or money. He came up from Buckinghamshire three weeks ago with bright anticipations, and now, for the second night in succession, he is walking the streets, and he is not yet at home in this new character. Will he accept our invitation? Yes; most gladly. Off he starts to the appointed meeting-place, carefully inquiring the way; for he is comparatively a stranger in London, and we have the pleasure of meeting him again, and—well something more than meeting him.

We divide our forces again, some taking Waterloo Bridge and the Embankment to Blackfriars Bridge and Ludgate Circus, while others proceed along Fleet Street. Between Temple Bar and Ludgate Circus several most unlikely cases are met with. Here is a Devonshire man from Barnstaple. For seven months he has been trying to get regular work. For the last three nights he has had an out-door lodging-place in the streets.

We meet a respectable-looking man near Ludgate Circus. He is evidently well educated, for his speech bewrayeth him. He is an optician; but the same cry, "no work." He, too, has been walking the streets for three nights. No one declines our invitation. We seem instinctively to know those who will prove willing guests. We try Shoe Lane and several adjacent streets, and then proceed to Blackfriars Bridge. There are not many here this morning. There is a tidy-looking woman, apparently a real decent body, with a large apron on, and a shawl wrapped around her. There is nothing tawdry about her. We speak to her, but she passes on. We try again, and our words cause her to stop. Very soon we learn her history. She has been employed in a laundry, but work has failed. What is she to do? The answer to another question reveals a terrible struggle. "I'm trying hard to keep right, sir; but work is very hard to get." Without home, without friends, without money, she is compelled to walk the streets, but not yet in a conventional sense. We must try hard to save her from that.

That bundle of rags in the dark recess encloses an old man. We invite him to food and shelter. Tears are his thanks.

When we have walked some twelve or fifteen miles, we feel weary ourselves. But, oh! these heart-sore wearied ones on either side as we attempt to cross London bridge. How shall we picture them? There they are, huddled together in the recesses, some ten or twelve in each. We try to pick out some special cases, but the attempt is useless. All seem in want of food and shelter. We hurriedly count the numbers, to guide us in our intended consultation. More than 130 here on London Bridge alone! What is to be done? Nearly 300 eager eyes forming a circle around us as we form ourselves into a committee of ways and means! We think of the tickets already distributed, of our food-supply, of the dimensions of our hall, of the word which has been sent to us that some forty or fifty have been waiting outside since one o'clock; and then we turn to the anxious faces watching the result of our deliberations. "We are afraid we cannot find breakfast for you all, but we will do the best we possibly can if you will go to the hall in Collier's Rents." We were prepared for some expressions of dissatisfaction, or eager clamour. But, no—not a word. The husky utterance of one man seemed to be the expression of all. "Never mind, sir, if you can't find us anything to eat; it's shelter we want most."

On reaching the Hall we count heads, and ask those who arrived early to occupy one side of the Hall. Our redistribution of seats is soon arranged, and we think it possible, by taking in another part of the Hall, to find accommodation for all, or nearly all, who are outside. But provisions? Ah! here we seem to be beaten. We will consult the crowd outside. "We are doubtful both about accommodation and the supply of food. We have not enough for you all. What shall we do?" "Let the ladies in first, sir." Ah, true gallantry! Some would call these men roughs. To us they are gentlemen; for forthwith they make a passage for the "ladies" to pass in, and not a man attempts to gain an entrance till every one of the women has passed the door. We must make another effort; we decide upon a fresh arrangement of our huge sandwiches; coffee we have enough of; and we admit every one of those waiting.

It is now five o'clock. Breakfast is announced for six o'clock. "There is nearly an hour to spare, if you like to go to sleep." The permission is gladly accepted, and nodding forms and heavy sounds are soon keeping company. At a quarter to six the sounds of music steal over the ears of the sleepers; the sounds gradually wax louder, until at six o'clock all the guests are awake and ready. Grace is sung, breakfast is quicky served, bright singing and instrumental music accompany the meal, a short address is given, more singing follows, and at seven o'clock the meeting is brought to a close.

Is this mission in harmony with the teachings of Him who came to seek and to save the lost? Surely, it calls for the sympathy and help of all Christians—yes, of all friends of humanity. Any aid for the prosecution of this and kindred mission work will be thankfully accepted by the Rev. Andrew Mearns, at the Memorial Hall, Farringdon Street, E.C.

EDW. WILSON GATES.

SHAM CASTLE.

IN the ancient and beautiful city of Bath there stands a building which, if viewed from a distance, looks like an imposing and massive old castle. But a closer acquaintance with it will dispel the delusion, and suggest to the visitor that things are not what they seem. Some hundred or more years ago, there resided in the city of Bath a gentleman of the name of Ralph Allen, who was possessed of considerable means. From his town residence he could obtain a sweeping view of the Downs. But as he was anxious to break the monotony of this outlook, he resolved

to erect a mass of masonry in the form of a castle, as represented in our illustration. It would seem that later on some artful dodger got up a scheme to complete this building, and lift Bath into the proud position of a University city. How much money he managed to get together for this purpose we do not know, but like many other schemers, he made himself scarce, leaving the deluded subscribers to get what comfort they could from the *sham castle* which he left among them, and which has ever since borne that name. But Bath is by no means the only place which has its shams. They are found everywhere. There is sham cotton largely made up of size. Sham jewellery lacquered, and looking like gold. Sham butter made of oils and fats, and called butterine. Sham coffee, the larger part chicory. Sham houses which look warm and comfortable, but are leaky, draughty, and unhealthy. Yes; sham castles are to be found in most places.

But it is most sad to think that even among men there are a great many shams. There are sham beggars without arms, with diseased legs, and distorted limbs. Some of these armless people have as many as he who writes these lines, and many of the diseased limbs are as sound as the soundest limbs of those who will read what is here written.

There are sham tradesmen who sell unwashable print, warranted fast in colour, and who are up to all the tricks of their profession. Tradesmen who advertise themselves as generous benefactors of the public, longing only to do good, and give twenty-five shillings' worth of goods for every sovereign spent in their shops. One wonders how they live, grow rich and fat, and ride their carriages. Can it be that they live on their losses like a certain dame said she did? Some one asked her for a reduction in the price of her loaves of bread. "I can't reduce it any more," said she; "for I lose on every loaf I sell, and if I did not sell a great quantity I could never live!"

Sham politicians. Ah! yes. The country is getting as full of these as the woods have been of blackberries this year. And they make such a good show that plain people are in great danger of being deceived. Listen to them! Hark how they fill the air with the rattle and crackle of their Rhetorical fireworks! See how they dazzle us with their displays of Oratorical sky-rockets! Wait awhile. Get a calm view of these shams, and you will see their rockets come down all stick. Don't be led astray by any paste-board, plaster-of-Paris talkers, whose heads are like bells, with nothing in them, but tongues. If you have a chance of hitting one of these sham castles on the bell-like head, you may find that, besides having nothing in it, it is cracked.

Then there are sham newspapers. Their name and number no man can tell. Many of them, most of them, profess to be friends of the people. We are most annoyed at that growing class which exists professedly to advocate the cause of the "masses," or the workers, as they are pleased to call them. The only interest many of these take in any class is to get the pence for their papers, which give little in return but poisoned bread, and the seeds of sad discontent.

But the worst of all are religious shams. People who, like the Pharisees of old, pretend to be what they are not. I once read of a picture which, when seen at a distance, looked very well. It showed a bending monk with hands upraised and clasped over a big Bible. As you gazed at it, you almost felt that you wanted to join the man in his devotions. But when you approached the painting you discovered that it was not a praying monk bending over a bible, but a fellow who was squeezing a lemon into a bowl of punch over which he bent. That was a religious sham. To what extent it represents reality, others, who know better than we can be supposed to do, must be left to say. But of the existence of religious shams we have no manner of doubt. Both pulpit and pew has had them, and, we fear, have them still. This is a thought

which makes us sad. We will not trust our pen to run into any description of them here and now. Let us rather, both reader and writer, make sure of one thing, that *we* are true. We are entering upon a New Year. Let us enter upon it with pure hearts and clean hands. Whatever the past may have been, however much of pretence and show we may have been guilty of, let us now, at the beginning of 1885, be true men; and, whatever our our position, rich or poor, young or old, let us live in the fear of God and always be ourselves. CHARLES LEACH.

NEAR THE LORD'S TABLE.

No. I.—"WHEN THEY HAD SUNG AN HYMN."*

THE ancient ritual, illumined by the most sacred memories of the national religion, was never more sublime than when it became embodied in the ordinance of "the new kingdom" instituted in the upper chamber. It was not done away with; it was not buried and left alone with its glory, to make a beautiful and picturesque grave in the world's history; but it was ennobled, made to live again, and to gather round itself a new heaven of gladness and hope. The hymn was not the funeral chant of the old memorial: it was the angel-song over its new Bethlehem; telling mankind that the redemption of Israel from Egypt was only the fragment of a larger divine idea, only the springtide whisper of infinite love passing on its way to Calvary and the redemption of humanity. It is a mistake to think that God creates His symbols in order to spoil them at the last. He does not leave them forsaken and despised, but immortalises them in some new and fuller symbols that keep their memory fresh and clear.

There is a divine way of being conservative—conservative even in a detail and a form. Over that little company of twelve the shadows of the cross were deepening like the cold dusk of a grand misery. Would it not be more befitting to omit the "cup of joy" and the usual thanksgiving chant? Would not that be a more tragic grouping of the incidents leading on to the last calamity? Christ thought not. Here is no revolutionary excitement, no sudden attack of old and hallowed traditions; for life is greater than tragedy, and heaven is larger than the earth.

So the hymn remained in the service, a shining lamp in the crowding darkness. The faith of the Saviour looked *through* the storm, and saw the luminous face of the Father beyond the clouds, restful and holy and calm. The angels of God on the other side of the storm were singing: the Son of God on this side of it can also

* [The service connected with the sacrifice of the Paschal Lamb closed with the chanting of Psalms cxv.—cxviii. This was in all likelihood the "hymn" sung by Jesus Christ and His eleven disciples before going out to the Mount of Olives. (MARK xiv. 26).]

sing, "O give thanks unto the Lord; for He is good: because His mercy endureth for ever"—and Gethsemane was very near!

> "In a season of calm weather,
> Though inland far we be,
> Our souls have sight of that immortal sea
> Which brought us hither;
> Can in a moment travel thither,
> And see the children sport upon the shore,
> And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore."

"In calm weather"—that is the achievement simply of a brave instinct; but this is the victory of faith—to see the play of the children upon the shore, when the waves dash wildly round the vessel, when the sails are torn and flutter about like the lost mirth of innocence, when the sky rushes past starless and faithless. It was so in a few hours after "they had sung an hymn."

The hymn is the prophecy of victory. It is the "All's well" of the trustful mariner. The starts of passion, the impulses of the will, the foolish gallantries of the soul—beneath: the serene love, the steady will, the eternal soul—above. Faith looks up like a child startled out of a horrid dream; and falls asleep again, smiling, with its arms under its head. "They . . . sang . . . an hymn." All's well!

A poet of Wales was one day in a blinding thunderstorm. Everything and everybody was in a hurry to get under shelter. It was one of those graphic lessons—lurid in every syllable—that God gives to teach us our frailty and littleness. Everything in the hurry of a great fear—with one exception. On a slight branch a thrush had alighted, with its heart full of song. And it sang: its glowing notes dropped in the wrath of the storm like gentle thoughts of God in the city of Sodom. It sang—

> "Each note twice over,
> Lest you should think he never could recapture
> The first fine careless rapture."

It flung its carollings with a joyous sense of triumph in that weltering Dead Sea of fire. The storm was only an accompaniment: the thrush possessed the jubilant melody, and held it clear and unsullied. And it sang unharmed; as if it felt the touch of the hand of God, hiding and sheltering its merry little heart. The poet heard and wrote a hymn. All's well!

Christ is the creator of the hymn. The world can sing because He sang long ago. Every truthful and inspired hymn is a fragment of glory from His harmonious life. When we caress our trouble, and refuse to taste the "cup of joy," we lose the kindly benediction of the hymn. It foretells the conquest in which we shall be "more than conquerors,"—but its prophetic strain becomes confused and dull when our heart denies the faith. Christ is our teacher of song: He will read to us the psalm of life in some quiet twilight hour of holy thought; and, when we are with Him in the upper chamber, He will lead us in the chant. Where Christ dares sing, the world dares join. When we are on this side of the cross, He will help us to see beyond it the tree of life with its leaves and flowers flashing beneath an unclouded sky.

"When they had sung . . . they went out." It is always so. The hymn is a holy amusement, is it not? A lyric of spiritual fancy? Nay: it has the noise of battle in it; there is a march of war palpitating in its music. Men ought to fight better after joining Christ in the chant. God does not give the world a song for nothing; He helps men to sing in the upper chamber, that their loyalty may not faint in the garden, and in the judgment hall, and on the dolorous way. Christ and you have been singing the same hymn together: now go out to the trial and the travail of life: you will sing with Him again some day "a new song" in the kingdom of His Father. "All's well."

"They went out." The air was keen with the frost of temptation; the struggle was severe; and it is so yet. Oh, Saviour! our trial is not so sore as Thy trial; but it is very sore for us! Our cross is not so bitter as Thy cross; but it is very bitter for us! Our burden is not so heavy as Thy burden; but it is very heavy for us! Our grave will not be so cold as Thy grave; but it will be very cold for us! Our heaven will not be so large as Thy heaven; but it will be as large as our heart can hold, when we shall again join Thee to sing the hymn!

Hull. H. Elvet Lewis.

HOW THE CURATE OF DITCHBOURNE LOST HIS WAY.

IN the south of England is a little village, which, to avoid discovery, we will call Ditchbourne. It consists of one long street, with houses planted along it at convenient and picturesque intervals. The country is hilly, and from many a point you can see the waves of the English Channel. It is one of those fair spots in which no element of scenic beauty is wanting, for field, and wood, and river, and ocean, and sky blend into a harmony which satisfies perfectly both eye and mind.

At one end of this village stands the church, a venerable but ugly structure. Adjoining it is the rectory, an inviting Elizabethan house. The rector was an aged man, who, after a very varied and not always agreeable experience of curates and their ways, had succeeded in procuring the services of an unexceptionable young man, whom he had installed in apartments at the other end of the village, in the fond hope that his troubles were over for at least a few years. The curate, the Rev. Ambrose Mallwyn, B.A., as we will call him, was fresh from Oxford, and was really anxious to do his duty. It was not by his own choice that he had read for orders, and assumed the clerical attire. His father had decided that one of his three sons should "go into the church." The eldest son preferred farming; the second son, at the prospect of being made a parson, ran away to Australia; and so the lot fell upon Ambrose, who was accordingly sent to Oxford. He was now

curate of Ditchbourne, and preached short sermons with a fluttering heart, and carried doles to the cottagers with a sincere desire to please them. He was not an athlete, and his only recreations were reading the classics and playing on the flute.

There were few houses at which he could visit, and the rector's family, on principle, bore themselves with stately reserve to all curates; and so the young divine often felt lonely, and contracted a shy and blushing manner. Judge, therefore, of his consternation when one morning an open carriage, drawn by a pair of horses, and containing a fashionably attired lady, drove up to the cottage where he lived, and he heard the footman asking if he were at home. He knew the lady as one of his congregation, and had heard of her as a rich widow living in a mansion just outside the village. Going to the side of the carriage he invited Mrs. Quantock to enter. But this she declined, saying that she had called to invite him to dine with her the next day. He turned crimson, and shook with nervous trepidation, but stammered out a grateful acceptance of the invitation.

The next day saw him at Elmside. The party was a small one, consisting of Mrs. Quantock, her lady companion, and an elderly gentleman whom Mrs. Quantock introduced as her uncle, without mentioning his name. The dinner passed off, as such dinners generally do, with very little conversation, and with nothing noticeable save that the uncle drank a whole decanter of sherry himself, a proceeding which had the effect of making him insufferably dull. After dinner the curate joined the ladies in the drawing room, and they sat one on each side of him; and first one said how delighted she was with the curate's preaching, and then the other said she felt it quite a treat to listen to such excellent reading as they had lately been favoured with; and one said what a pity it was that the rector had such old-fashioned notions about the singing, and the other chimed in with the hope that "dear Mr. Mallwyn" would be able to sustain the labour of looking after the whole parish. In this way they rang the changes of flattery to such a tune that the blushing curate began to feel himself a person of social importance. On taking his leave, Mrs. Quantock pressed him earnestly to take pity on her loneliness, and come often to see her, an invitation of which he availed himself to the full.

A few months passed by and the young man gradually got to feel as if he were in love with his fair neighbour, but as she was ten years older than himself, and he had no wealth equal to hers, he felt as if the prize were far out of his reach. But one morning he received a visit from Mrs. Quantock's companion, who, after some finessing and adroit management of the conversation, told him, in strict confidence, what she had heard "dear Mrs. Quantock" say about him. It was to the effect that she considered him the most agreeable man she had ever met, and that if ever she married again it would be to just such a man. The result may easily be foreseen. The poor young man fluttered into the net, and before long was installed at Elmside as the husband of its mistress. How it came

about he hardly knew, but he signed a marriage settlement, giving his wife an unlimited control over all his income, so that when, at her wish, he resigned his curacy, he was entirely at her mercy. What this meant he soon found out. As he said to me once:

"Ah! my friend, I lost my way that time: I lost my way."

Before they had been married long he found that his wife had a violent dislike for all religious ordinances in the home. She would go to church in a carriage and pair, but she opposed with unsparing contempt her husband's wish to read morning and evening prayers with the household. The young man felt this painfully, for he was truly conscientious in his religious duties. Too ignorant of the world to know what to do, he could only suffer in silence.

But this was only the beginning. When they were first married she had assumed a dictatorial and peremptory tone, which he, in his somewhat juvenile fondness, had felt to be humorous, and to which he had responded playfully. But, when six months had passed, this habit developed in a startling way; for she raged with anger, and burst into coarse abuse over some difference of opinion he had ventured to offer. Evil names came from her tongue in such profusion that he could only sit shocked and silent. The next day he left the room when she again spoke unbecomingly, whereupon she rushed after him and struck him on the face. She completed her circle of folly by informing him that she was going to Bath for a month, and would thank him to remain at home.

So she went, and a year passed, and neither letters nor visits could win her to her home. It was at this time he sought my advice and help. After consultation with a lawyer, he sold all the furniture and proceeded to America. In an obscure town in the far West he is still living, a man of blighted prospects, with a torturing consciousness of irretrievable folly, and a continual dread of further complications in his life. We correspond sometimes, and I hear now and then of his wife, though nothing I can venture to tell him.

In elaborating fictitious circumstances, nothing is easier than to tone them down to serve one's purpose. But in narrating events as they happen, we often have to present, as now, an unpleasing picture. But such a picture may point the moral of such words as these: "The prudent man looked well to his goings, but the simple pass on and are punished. . . . It is better to dwell in a corner of a housetop, than with a brawling woman in a wide house. . . . Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith." It is easy to lose our way when flattery comes to the aid of our vanity; but the truly wise man turns to heaven and says, "Thou shalt guide me with Thy counsel."

A. SHORTMAN.

The Editors deeply regret that they are not able to find room for several articles, including one by the Rev. W. Pierce, of Leytonstone, on "Christian Life and Work—their difficulties": also the opening chapter of Miss M. A. Paull's New Story, "Rose Easton." Both are in type and will appear in our next issue.

THE WAY OF THE RAIN.

I HEARD an old farmer talk one day,
Telling his listeners how
In the wide new country far away
The rainfall follows the plough.

"As fast as they break it up, you see,
And turn the heart to the sun,
As they open the furrows deep and free,
And the tillage is begun,

"The earth grows mellow, and more and more
It holds and sends to the sky,
A moisture it never had before,
When its face was hard and dry.

"And so wherever the ploughshares run
The clouds run overhead,
And the soil that works and lets in the sun
With water is always fed."

I wonder if that old farmer knew
The half of his simple word,
Or guessed the message that, heavenly true,
Within it was hidden and heard?

It fell on my ear by chance that day,
But the gladness lingers now,
To think it is always God's dear way
That the rainfall follows the plough.

A. D. T. WHITNEY.

APPLES OF GOLD.

I. THE PILGRIM'S SONG.

WHEN David said "Thy statutes have been my song in the house of my pilgrimage" (see Psalm cxix. 54), he had been living in the house of his pilgrimage a long time. He was an old man, and in a matter of this kind it is the testimony of the old, the witness of ripe experience, which is by far the best worth having. The aged Psalmist had a very clear and definite idea as to life on earth, what it is, and how to treat it. His body he regards simply as the tent in which he himself is for awhile taking shelter, moving it here or there as occasion serves, at the dictates of that pilgrim soul within, which can never continue in one stay, but surely and steadily travels towards the gates that open into the real land of life. Life a pilgrimage, a journey, just that, and nothing more. Whether he was clad in a shepherd's doublet, a soldier's mail, or a monarch's robes, he knew and felt himself to be a traveller, a pilgrim, a sojourner, as all his fathers were. It is wise and well for us to realise that this is exactly our condition; that we too are on the track, alternately pitching and striking our tents, for ever passing on, and passing through. If we did we should come to the same conclusion as he did, that it is a foolish and ruinous investment to stake our whole fortunes here, and must end in bankruptcy of the most ruinous kind. If this view of life were clear to us and a sense of its real character were always present with us, it would save us from an immense amount of disappointment. It would enable us to turn the circumstances of life to such account as to secure to us an abundant entrance and a glad welcome into everlasting habitations.

A pilgrim's lot cannot, in the nature of things, be altogether kindly and satisfactory. If there is too much of the easy and rest-

ful element in it, there is a sad danger of becoming citizens, instead of lodgers; of building houses, instead of merely sojourning in tents, and so the end of the sojourn would come upon us as a sad surprise. It is a great thing for a traveller through life not to expect too much, so that he may reduce his disappointments to a minimum, and learn to take patiently and hopefully whatever of hap and fortune may greet him by the way. A pilgrim will not look for soft green sward all the way, or for the rippling of pleasant brooks for ever in his ear. He must look for wearied feet and tired limbs, and patches of hard travel mixed with stretches of easy going. He must make up his mind that as the climates alter and the seasons vary, he will have some awkward spells of bad weather. He must look out, at the various inns and caravanserais and other lodging-places on his route, for a good deal of inconvenience, high charges for insufficient shelter, and exaction for poor fare. Everybody knows that a traveller has got to rough it, with this compensating thought ever with him, that it will all be altered by and by, when the towers of the city of habitation are close upon him, and his eyes shall be gladdened with the nearing lights of home.

There is no doubt that the pilgrim might get on better if he were content to settle down; to live in the world and of the world, and do as the worldlings do; though it must not be forgotten that they too have hard times of it, very, and have no prospect to hearten them; no hope to give them help and cheer. But the pious pilgrim of the night will not be deluded into any such ruinous temporising with present good: he is not going to choose to have his portion in this life; because he knows that that portion in itself is both uncertain and disappointing, and that it is apt to melt away with amazing speed, and to fade out like summer flowers beneath the sun. And so he says, "I am a stranger and a sojourner," pays his score, grips his staff, and, setting his face westward, bravely travels on. He holds himself ready to quit at a moment's notice, and will not be surprised if the journey closes in winter or mid-summer, at high noon or at the dead of night. Sometimes when the way is very hard, and his goings are rough, walking seems too slow for him, and he is apt to sigh for wings that he may flee away and be at rest; but if he be a wise pilgrim he checks all that, restrains his impatience, tries to get a glimpse of the lights in the distance to cheer him, and so plods on.

But—and this is the rich and blessed burden of David's song—the Christian pilgrim has exceedingly good cheer to lighten his journey, and to comfort and help him on his way. "Thy statutes," says David, "have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage." There is here an allusion to the ancient Jewish custom of chanting songs of degrees, or marching songs, in connection with their principal services and holy days. Three times a year did the tribes go up to Jerusalem to worship the Lord on Mount Zion. It must have been an attractive sight to see the pilgrim worshippers trooping from the provinces to pay their vows in the house of the

Lord, and to hear them as they rounded some hillside, climbed some slope, or threaded some valley, giving voice to some psalm or hymn, and travelling to the strains of Zion's songs. In some such fashion those who travel on the holy highway are said to go with "songs and everlasting joy upon their heads." Had pilgrim Israel sung in the wilderness instead of murmuring, what discipline and suffering they would have escaped! But mind you, these songs, the songs of which the Psalmist speaks, the songs which can really help and strengthen the pilgrim, must be songs of the heart, inspired songs, put first into the soul by God, and then breathed out from the soul by the trustful, grateful, hopeful heart.

The world has its songs, and many of them are very beautiful; they are blithe enough while the revels last, or while the track of life is smooth to the feet, and there is plenty of sunshine overhead; but they are apt to lapse into doleful silence when darkness gathers, or the wind blows chill and cold along the way. But the songs that are shapen by the statutes of God, inspired by His word of guidance, help and hope, are songs in the night; songs in the storm; songs whose music grows sweeter, mellower, and more inspiring the more the heavens lower, the more the air grows thick with gloom. They are songs of faith; for amid all the perils and uncertainties of the way, the Christian walks secure from evil, and knows that all is well. They are songs of Contentment, of Peace, of Love, of Hope, of Triumph, of Patience, and of Praise. How marvellously rich the Church is in these heart-melodies! How wealthy in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs! Songs, every one of them, inspired by these statutes—the precious and immortal Word of God.

Said singing David, who was singing shepherd, singing soldier, singing king, and singing pilgrim, "In thy law will I meditate day and night." God's Word was stored in his memory, lodged in his heart, and so it inspired his soul and loosed his tongue, and these songs, sung in the house of his pilgrimage, brightened his life and cheered his heart, as they have cheered and brightened the hearts and lives of millions of pilgrims, who have gone on their way rejoicing with these mellow melodies on their lips, until they change them for the new and deathless song of Moses and the Lamb! But how much vaster, richer, and more evangelical are our songs! What an ocean of song, sparkling with inspiration, and rife with refreshing and helpful stimulus, *we* have at our disposal!

Now, think a moment, how these statutes, this inspired Word of the Lord, may well become the pilgrim's song, as he travels through this wilderness "to fairer worlds on high." If these statutes are his inspiration, then the heart is right with God; the soul is in harmony with the word, and way, and will of the God of holiness and truth; and to be right-hearted, trust me, is to be, in the best sense, light-hearted. A good conscience is an admirable musical composer, and can set its suggestions to music of a wonderfully helpful kind. The breaking of the law brings the aching of the heart; wrong-doing brings long rueing; but uprightness shall

bring brightness; clean palms shall bring glad psalms; and of all songs in the world, *that* will serve us best, whatever it is, that springs from pure lips, a good conscience, and a pure heart.

Then again, the statutes of the Lord are a potent inspirer of song, because they guarantee the supply of all the pilgrim's needs, and warrant a daily and hourly confidence that the good hand of God, in Providence and Grace, will be with the traveller all the way. "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want." I wonder how many bursts of melody that one passage has caused to flow from the happy and confiding believers who daily walk with God. "He restoreth my soul, He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake!" And then again, the statutes point out the pilgrim's path so clearly, that a wayfaring man, however much he blunders, need not mistake his road. Perplexity, doubt, questioning, uncertainty,—these, and such as these, may well silence a traveller and hold him dumb, for fear he misses his track; but these statutes are the pilgrim's guide, his chart, his star, his lamp, his light.

These statutes also clearly depict and promise the pilgrim's future of home and rest. He is told that victory is sure, that the gates are wide open, his crown prepared, his mansion ready, and his place provided at the coronation feast of Christ. They show him over and over again the New Jerusalem, the holy city, and many a time they bring it so near that he can catch a glimpse of its splendours, and hear the sound of harpers harping with their harps!

Such are some of the inspirations that come to us as we travel. The songs of Zion, that can cheer our steps, strengthen our hearts, and gladden our souls on our life-path through this wilderness, are rich, exceeding rich, if we have but the pilgrim spirit and the pilgrim's hope, and travel for ever in company with the Divine Greatheart who is ever at hand to guide us, appointed thereto by the pilgrim's God.

We are all travellers. We must be perpetually moving on. But whither? Let us see to it that the track on which we travel is the way of righteousness, the way that leadeth unto life. Let us hold the world lightly; don't live in it; simply journey through it, doing right, and loving God and our neighbour as we go, and each day's close shall find us "A day's march nearer home!"

Through brake and through briar,
Whatever winds blow;
Hie you onward, bold pilgrims,
And sing as you go.

In the desert, your Saviour
A table will spread;
On the lion and adder
Unhurt shall ye tread;

And the word of your God,
As ye travel along,
Shall strengthen with motive
And cheer you with song.

When the night winds are blowing
All dreary and wild,
Your God is aye with you
To comfort His child.

And while and wherever
Your footsteps may roam,
Your God will still speed you,
And bring you safe Home.

Home! Home! sweet, sweet, Home!
The songs of the pilgrim
Will be sweeter at Home!

J. Jackson Wray.

THE YOUNG FOLK'S CORNER.

A Boy's Sermon.

"Eddie," said Harry, "I'll be a minister, and preach you a sermon."

"Well," said Eddie, "and I'll be the peoples."

Harry began:—"My text is a short and easy one—*Be kind.* There are some little texts in the Bible on purpose for children, and this is one of them. These are the heads of my sermon:

"First. *Be kind to Papa*, and don't make a noise when he has the headache. I don't believe you know what a headache is; but I do. I had one once, and I did not want to hear any one speak a word.

"Second. *Be kind to Mamma*, and do not make her tell you to do a thing more than once. It is very tiresome to say 'It is time for you to go to bed,' half a dozen times over.

"Third. *Be kind to Baby* ——"

"You have left out 'Be kind to Harry,'" interrupted Eddie.

"Yes," said Harry, "I don't mean to mention my own name in the sermon. I was saying *Be kind to Baby*, and let her have your red soldier to play with when she wants it.

"Fourth. *Be kind to Jane*, and don't scream and kick when she washes and dresses you."

Here Eddie looked a little ashamed, and said "But she pulled my hair with the comb."

"People musn't talk in church," said Harry.

"Fifth. *Be kind to Kitty*. Do what will make her purr, and don't do what will make her cry."

"Isn't the sermon nearly done?" asked Eddie. "I want to sing." And so, without waiting for Harry to finish his discourse or give out a hymn, she began to sing, and so Harry had to stop.

But did not Harry preach a capital sermon?

Young folks should practice it.

OUR LIBRARY TABLE.

We have received, from Messrs. Hodder and Stoughton, *The Minister's Pocket Diary for* 1885, a most useful book for ministers of all denominations. It is well printed, and contains information which should make its use most helpful to its possessor. It supplies not only the ordinary diary, but pages ruled for recording sermons preached—baptisms, marriages, funerals, absentees, inquirers, texts for sermons, etc., etc., and thus should be exceptionally useful as a "Minister's Pocket Book."

Messrs. Dean and Son have long been known as unrivalled among publishers for the books they issue for young people, and judging from the specimens now on our table they are not soon likely to lose their reputation. Foremost among them is *Zigzag Journeys in the Western States of America*. It is a series of stories illustrating the early settlement of the States which divide among them the wonderful territory lying to the west and north-west of the original American States, and furnishing a glance at their almost infinite resources. It is written in a style always attractive to young people, and profusely illustrated with woodcuts of no ordinary beauty. In these days of extensive emigration to the north-west, we can conceive of few more valuable gift books to the younger members of our families. Among the toy books this season we have seen none more beautiful than the one entitled *All in the Sun*, the chief feature of which is that between the coloured pictures we have etchings of a most artistic character. We would specially mention, too, a pictorial trip through Europe, entitled *Other Folks at Home*. The plates representing the different countries are composite pictures, embracing the postage stamp, the national flag, arms, an outline map, sports and costumes, &c., of each nation, and cannot fail to be interesting and attractive to boys and girls. There are many others in the series we cannot particularise. All are beautiful in their kind, and we cannot do better than recommend aunts and grandmamas to look over these attractive books before they decide on the presents they intend to make to their pets at this Christmastide.

THE TEACHERS' PAGE.

INTERNATIONAL LESSONS FOR JANUARY.

We propose, each month, to stand beside our fellow-teachers, and look over the lessons which we shall have to teach, trying, beforehand, to get a general idea of the subject to be treated; to put ourselves in full sympathy with it; and to see plainly what has to be taught to the children. We shall make a special effort to bring to view the more directly *religious* teachings, which are in some danger of slipping away, out of notice, under our modern explanatory teaching methods.

We hope that our hints and suggestions will prove helpful to *parents* and *sisters* who may have home classes, as well as to our Sunday-school teachers.

During the first half of the year the person of the Apostle Paul is prominent in the series of lessons. We have studied, during the year 1884, his *missionary* work; and now we come to his *witnessing* work, through personal suffering; and to the *testing*, of his character and spirit, by circumstances of misunderstanding and peril. He said, "to me to live is Christ"; we are to see how true this was of him when he was persecuted, imprisoned, and bound. Everywhere, and in everything, he was *loyal to Christ*.

The four lessons for January deal with Acts xx. and xxi. 1-14, and these portions include the time of Paul's life, from his leaving Ephesus to his arrival at Jerusalem. Most interesting and affecting incidents fill the brief record of these few months. Looking the passages over, we fix our minds on the following topics.

1.—A short time of quiet labour in Macedonia and Greece. Only three months, but a most earnest time, because Paul had arranged to journey to Jerusalem, and it was very uncertain whether he would ever return. During this time he was busy gathering up the collection for the poor saints at Jerusalem, which he purposed to take to the Holy City. Explain his anxiety to show, by this collection, that his teachings had not alienated the Gentiles from the Jews.

2.—The hastening of his journey through the persecutions of the Jews. Notice how bitterly the Jewish party, at this time, pursued Paul from place to place. A sad example of religious bigotry.

3.—His care to avoid giving ground for slanders in relation to the money. This explains why the names of those who accompanied him are given. They were like *auditors*, or witnesses to the correctness of his accounts.

4.—The scene at Troas. Treat it as indicating the esteem faithful ministers win; and the power for good which faithful ministers exert. Also illustrate the considerateness for the *young*, which should be *shown* in all Christian services. Knowledge of the interior of Eastern houses is necessary to explain the position and fall of Eutychus.

5.—Scene at Miletus. (1) Appeal to a life which had been earnest and self-denying, for Christ's sake. (2) Expectation of closing labour, if not life, putting seriousness into a man's words. (3) Warnings and advice to those who must carry on Christian work after him. (4) A precious sentence, spoken by the Lord Jesus, but not found elsewhere. (5) A most affecting farewell.

6. — Incidents of journeying. Specially notice efforts to restrain Paul, and keep him from doing what he knew to be his Master's will. Compare "the disobedient prophet" (II Kings xiii. 20, 22). Paul withstood the temptation, and went on; willing to suffer and die, but not willing to fail in *simple unquestioning obedience*.

What, in the four lessons, seems to be of special interest to us? What may we make a centre for all our teaching? We think it should be this, — "Paul's sanctified and Christlike *character* was his great power." This comes out in his speech at Miletus. Compare with it Samuel's appeal. Neither were egotistical. And this comes out also in the *affection* shown to him wherever he went in this journey. *We have to show what Christian faith —life for Christ—can do for* CHARACTER. It can so master our infirmities, tone our tempers, clothe us with graces, and make us like Christ, that, with the beloved Apostle, *we* shall win everybody's love and trust, and so become a power over them for good.

ROBERT TUCK.

ROSE EASTON.

By M. A. Paull, Author of "Whatsoever," "Tim's Troubles," "Friar Hildebrand's Cross," &c., &c.

Chapter I.—IN THE CITY TEMPLE.

A GREY London morning! Outside the building dedicated to God's worship, rolled, at that hour, omnibuses, waggons, carts, carriages unceasingly, with a bicycle or a tricycle between, carrying forward, in dangerous proximity to horses' heels, some city clerk or industrious merchant, or adventurous tourist. The Holborn pavements are full of pedestrians, hurrying forward; for 9 a.m. is an especially busy hour, so many are hastening to desk, to counting-house, to office, to warehouse, and to shop.

But not a few, on this particular grey autumn morn, turn in at the open doors of this chapel, till every seat below is occupied by a male figure, ministerial or lay delegate to this Session of the Congregational Union, while above, the galleries are thronged with male and female interested hearers and spectators of the proceedings.

Any one who can measure the wonderful possibilities of these human lives of ours—any one who knows from experience what worlds we live in, in the great internal economy of our minds, may find a vast field for thought in those figures below, each the centre of his own little outside world, many of them touching hearts and sympathies far beyond their immediate surroundings. Missionaries are here, looking again, with eyes long used to other sights and sounds, at the old familiar British faces, hearing the dear old truths of the Gospel in the beloved mother tongue; writers are here, who touch hearts without ever touching the hands belonging

to them; teachers, whose work goes away from them into corners of God's great vineyard, of which they may have hardly realised the existence; and ministers, and preachers, some full of fire, some of tenderness, some of erudition. God be blessed for His glorious "diversity of operation"!

The galleries hold a no less interesting assemblage. Here are the wives and mothers and daughters and sisters of many of those in the body of the Temple; here are "widows indeed," who have once shared in the toils and labours of saintly men who have exchanged earth for heaven. Here, too, are aged couples smiling at each other, in the sweet response of kindred hearts, when the eloquent tongue of the great preacher in the marble pulpit below awakes in them responsive chords. And here are a few of the young preachers who have brought their young wives, and cannot make up their minds to leave them, strangers in the wondrous city, alone in the great gallery.

Amongst these was the Rev. Peter Gromer, with his very pretty Alice, of whose beauty he was most naturally and justly proud. Peter had been stationed for about five years at the busy town of Saxerby, and was fast gaining a reputation for able sermons, and for peculiarity. He liked the people of the town to be able to recognise him when they saw him, so he wore his thick dark hair in a very bushy mass around his rather minute good features, and his small keen black eyes seemed to pierce a surrounding gloom before their brightness reached you.

Mr. Gromer had plenty of difficulties before him, and perhaps it was well for his courage that he had not fully grasped them. His income was very small, and his wife was very fashionable. He idolised her at present; and all the many little inconveniences he had already suffered in his four years of wedded life, he told himself, were the result of her charming inexperience, her exquisite innocence, her high breeding. Already two small olive branches blessed their united love, and it had been an expensive duty to provide for their suitable care during this London absence on the part of their parents.

But Alice had declared that she must come to London. It was really a shame that she had not been there since the year of their marriage, and knew almost nothing as to how the ladies in the great metropolis did up their hair, and robed their persons. It would be ever so cruel of Peter if he refused his Ally the sight she so longed for! And so, though the young minister had many misgivings, he began to yield. Then Alice was also wise enough to suggest reasons that had more weight with him. She should so like to hear him preach in London, and to find how the united great minds in their particular body of Christians responded to the eloquence of her husband's tongue, to the depth of her husband's thought. He would take part in the discussions, he would be appreciated, understood, as he never could be in Saxerby, and, perhaps, some London congregation might give him a call.

The preacher who stood in the marble pulpit was an object of

real interest to Peter Gromer and his wife. Yet, for a long time, Alice at any rate was much more absorbed in minor matters—in wondering who this one was and that one was who sat below him, the venerable silver-haired men, their heads so obviously intellectual, their faces so earnest and so thoughtful—than in listening to the address of the Chairman. But at last she began to listen; her lace cuffs ceased to claim her attention, her gloves were of no moment, her hat was altogether forgotten; for the preacher's words demanded her attention, if not her approval. "I have spoken," he said, "of the pastor and his wife. In speaking of the wife, I am rendering honour to whom honour is due. Without being a public slave——"

"I should think not, indeed," whispered Alice, indignantly, *sotto voce* to her husband.

"—The wife can minister abundantly to the profit of the church through the domestic comfort of the pastor, and I hold it to be the very cruelty of injustice—doubly infamous because done to a woman—which says that the pastor's wife does nothing for the church because she does not appear in some public or official capacity. Does she do nothing who almost doubles the little salary by cunning uses of economy?"

Alice coloured, but not with pleasure—she was vexed; she could not help colouring.

"Is she to be reckoned of no account who makes the hearthstone warm in the study at the expense of a little coldness in other chambers? Is she to be treated with indifference who persuades her husband that she is so well that she does not need a holiday in order that she may not touch the shillings that would lengthen his, when, God knows, a breath of mountain air would make her young again?"

Amidst the overwhelming cheers that greeted these words so straightly winged from the great heart of the preacher into the hearts of his audience, Peter Gromer whispered two words into the ears of Alice: "Rose Easton!"

Alice made no reply. She could have cried with vexation. Were all these plaudits that faded, but to be again renewed, for such a woman as Rose Easton, and none for her; none for the sweet charming young wives who accompanied their husbands to these great meetings, and sympathised in all they saw and felt? This tiresome Chairman—to whom, though he did say such things about such common-place wives, you could not help listening as if to the roll of ocean or organ music—now continued, "I accept Mr. Lecky's picture of a rural parsonage, and apply it, with obvious modifications, to many a Nonconformist minister's household. Speaking of the clergyman's wife, the author says, 'In visiting the sick, relieving the poor, instructing the young, and discharging a thousand delicate offices, for which a woman's tact is especially needed, his wife finds a sphere of labour which is at once intensely active and intensely feminine, and her example is not less beneficial than her ministrations.' Brethren," the Chairman went on, "I do not lower the dignity of this chair in recognising the fact that 'many a

flower is born to blush unseen,' and in praising self-denial that never mars its sacrifice by complaint; on the contrary, I invest the chair with a tenderer sanctity by sending from it a message which you will not fail to deliver to the companions who, by dividing your burdens, have doubled your usefulness."

Oh! how they cheered him as he finished this eloquent eulogium on saintly piety and unselfish womanhood. And there, below Peter and Alice, his plain homely face all glorified with love and tears, was Paul Easton, thinking of Rose, no doubt, and treasuring up every word that had been spoken, as if of her only, and conning the Chairman's sweet message o'er and o'er, like a schoolboy learning the one lesson that he loves. Alice was deeply mortified. She did not care to look responsively at her husband any more as the preacher continued, and yet she could but hear him, and hear, too, all the time, as it seemed to her excited imagination, those other words that were her condemnation.

One little scene in Mrs. Easton's parlour between herself and that lady was ever before her. Alice had prided herself considerably on the superiority of herself and Peter Gromer, her husband, over Paul Easton and Rose, his wife. Their style, their tastes, their knowledge of the great world were all so immensely greater than that of the Eastons. And when she called that morning of which she was now thinking, upon Rose Easton, she had found her in the small parlour she thought so "stuffy," surrounded by her little children, busily mending her husband's coat, and at the same time superintending the proceedings of the three-years old girl, next older than the baby, who was earnestly engaged "putting ma's work-box neat."

"Of course you mean to go to London, Rose," she said. "I'm going. I told Peter I must; and he saw it at once, and decided that it was nothing but right."

"Go to London!" laughed Rose Easton gently. "My dear Alice, what a strange idea! *Of course* I am not going. Why, who could I leave with the children? Who would help Mary to keep things straight? Do you suppose Paul could get the rest and refreshment he so much needs if he were anxious as to household matters during his absence? My place is at home, dear Alice, and yet you may rest assured I shall often be with you all in spirit, and trust you will have a good time."

"I suppose you really think, though you don't say so, that I ought not to go, that I can't be spared from my babies, and that we can't afford it any more than you and Mr. Easton." All this Alice Gromer said, a little spitefully, and with a slight toss of her pretty head.

Rose Easton laughed merrily, a sweet, genial laugh, that should have been enough to dispel every suspicion of annoyance in her companion's mind.

"My dear Alice," she said, "I hope you will be good enough to clear me of harbouring any thoughts at all in relation to your business. I have found, ever since I have been old enough to think

about these subjects at all, that I have enough to do to mind my own, and to judge of my own matters, and to attend to my own family, without taking upon myself the care of other people's duties in life, and fixing an estimate of their responsibilities. If I can help anybody, if I can be a mother to any neglected little ones, a sister to any forlorn heart, a friend to any who lack other friendships, and especially to those whom my dear husband's position necessarily introduces to my notice, my Heavenly Father knows how I desire to accept such a sweet privilege."

At that moment, Mr. Easton entered the room. He shook hands cordially with Alice Gromer, and enquired for Peter.

"I suppose we shall be companions the week after next, pretty much," he said, smiling, "we both go to the autumnal session."

"You must not reckon upon Mr. Gromer's company," said his wife; "Alice is going."

"Oh! indeed," said Mr. Easton, and then stopped short. He had no easy grace of manner to make him able to hide his very great surprise, and his wife, with her natural courtesy, strove to conceal a certain brusqueness, which she thought was perhaps caused by some little disappointment on his part. She talked of the children, of the weather, of any subject that came readily to her thoughts.

Alice had resented Mr. Easton's astonishment, and did not remain long at the house after he entered it. But the visit and his manner, she had thought of many times since, and her cheeks flushed when she asked herself, is it possible he knows that we owe a good deal in Saxerby? The coal merchant, the butcher, the baker, the draper—there were accounts ever increasing in amount with each of these tradespeople, and the journey to London would necessitate a new dress, a new hat, and the accompanying small items, that looked so much in a bill when it had to be settled, yet which, as everybody knows, no lady can do without. The washerwoman, the milkman, and the upholsterer were each of them also on her list, and, though a hundred pounds might as yet have nearly cleared every debt, how were a hundred pounds to be saved from an income that was so paltry as never to meet the just demands made upon it?

But this journey to London was the very means she had devised to enable them to set themselves free from their distressing liabilities. Peter's fluent tongue, Peter's beautiful similes; above all, perhaps, if people knew the value of human hair and eyes, the dark piercing orbs that penetrated that cloud of richest brown, were sure to attract attention from a London church, and London churches, as is well known, give far greater and more appropriate incomes to their ministers than such unappreciative towns as Saxerby. When you looked at it in the proper way—not in the miserably prosaic way of plain matter-of-fact Mr. Easton—it was really most right and just that they should go to London.

Alice took leave of her babies with less anxiety than good mothers are wont to feel. She had always determined from the first not to make herself a slave to her children, as Rose Easton did.

Babies got on well enough, and were far finer and more independent and good tempered, if they were left to shift to themselves a little.

"Goodbye, Tottles," she said to her little girl, "if you are good and don't pinch baby, and don't tease nursie, I shall bring you home something lovely from great big London; but if you are naughty—oh! then it will be dreadful, I sha'n't have anything at all for you. Goodbye, my little man." With these words she kissed both the tiny creatures and gave them up to the nurse with a laugh and a smile, and, if it must be told, a delightful sense of freedom and ease.

(*To be continued.*)

[The City Temple, Holborn Viaduct, is the oldest Congregational church in London. Formed, 1640, by Thomas Goodwin, D.D., Preacher to the Council of State, and President of Magdalen College, Oxford, Member of Westminster Assembly of Divines, Chaplain to Oliver Cromwell. Church first met in Anchor Lane, Thames Street; then, in 1672, in Paved Alley, Lime Street; in 1755 it removed to Miles Lane; in 1766, to Camomile Street; in 1819, under the ministry of John Clayton, to the Poultry, Cheapside; S. B. Bergne succeeded Mr. Clayton; and in 1854 Dr. Spence became the pastor. Dr. Joseph Parker, of Cavendish Chapel, Manchester, accepted the oversight of the church in June, 1869, and under his ministry the church removed to the present building in May, 1873. The chapel in the Poultry was sold for £50,200, and the City Temple, including site, memorial windows, furniture, organ, &c., cost £70,000.]

"ROCK OF AGES."

Rock of Ages, standing fast
In the desert wild and vast;
Lifting up thy stately form
To the sunshine and the storm;
Changeless through all changing time,
Strong, impregnable, sublime.

Rock of Ages, let me hide
In Thy deeply-caverned side
When the tempest rolls on high,
And the lightnings cleave the sky;
Sheltered there let me remain
Till the heavens grow bright again.

Rock of Ages, let me rest
In Thy shadow, when distressed
By the long and weary way,
Or the noontide's burning ray;
There awhile mine eyes to close
In the sweetness of repose.

Rock of Ages, let me stand
On Thy brow, serene and grand:
Thence to view the way I've come,
Thence to catch a glimpse of home—
Home, where toils and troubles cease
And the soul finds perfect peace.

CHRISTIAN LIFE AND WORK—THEIR DIFFICULTIES.

ONE of the practical maxims of Christianity is that a man, before undertaking any serious work, should COUNT THE COST. The difficulties which beset the Christian life are by no means gilded over in the Scriptures. At the commencement of our career we are bidden to take up our cross, to deny ourselves. There are no *ex parte* statements intended to beguile men into becoming followers of Christ, by glozing over all the difficulties, and emphasizing all the delights, of discipleship. The completest contrast to the scriptural method of gaining adherents would be that of the recruiting sergeant, who leads a silly youth captive by his picture of a brief life of cakes and ale, with a marshal's batôn held invitingly in the near future. The terrible realities of war are never hinted at. Not so are men addressed by the Christian Scriptures. There is an intense, yearning, heart-breaking, invitation to all men to join the ranks of the redeemed, but—the way is narrow, the gate is strait, and all who travel by it must endure chastening as sons.

This is the honest method, but it is the best also. We "Count the Cost," and know that in the world we shall have tribulation, inasmuch as we are followers of Jesus Christ. The trials and difficulties which we may meet shall not disappoint us, or cause us to regret our enterprise; but the solace, the loving encouragement, the light of God's countenance, they shall be as glad surprises.

Fully and frankly, therefore, we admit the difficulties of the Christian life. It *is* hard to renounce our selfishness, to withstand temptation, to be absolutely just, to be courteous under provocation, to love all men, to be spiritually minded. But this is the practical question to which we would seriously address ourselves. Ought the difficulty to deter any one?

If only those things were done which were easy of accomplishment, and promised well in their beginnings, how many noble and good things were left undone. Pass by the great and the marvellous catalogue of their achievements, and come to the commonest lives, and yet how true is this. Few lives there must be, by comparison, that have not in them records of forlorn hopes, pursued in faith and patience, and issuing in victory and satisfaction.

Human life is conditioned by toil. The enunciation of that principle is one of the grand fundamental notes struck in the early chapters of Genesis. And it is a cardinal error to imagine that in any fortunate lot in life the condition is abrogated. The possession of wealth, the command of service, leaves man just where he was according to the divine stipulation in Genesis. For, cease to do, avoid difficulty, shrink from toil, satiate the spirit in complete and unredeemed selfish luxury; this only happens,—that instead of life being conditioned by toil, existence becomes itself

a toil, and worse. For toil can minister pleasure; but *ennui* is a black and bitter curse.

Perhaps, it will be objected that the difficulties of the Christian life are peculiarly great, and against this we are not careful to contend. The quarryman who hews the block out of the mountain has difficulties to overcome; though they are not so great as those of the mason; nor are his so great as those of the sculptor, in whose hands the stone catches the very grace and accent of life. Now religion is the principal thing. The education of the soul in its higher relationships with God and humanity is the noblest work allotted to man, and it ought not to deter us, that its difficulties are commensurate with its greatness. Besides all which, let us never forget that strength to toil comes in toiling, which also supplies the capacity to enjoy.

The sage King says, in Ecclesiastes, "He that observeth the wind shall not sow." The unwise husbandman says, one day, the wind is so high it would blow away the seed; another day he says the wind threatens rain, and he had better not go afield. Yet again, the wind is too cold. "Wife," says he, "put more wood upon the fire—it's terribly cold to-day, with this north-east wind; I think I'll stay at home." And thus an idle man flees from obstacles which he ought to surmount, so that, when autumn comes, there is no rich harvest for him. "He that observeth the wind shall not sow." The workman who waits until there are no difficulties, will wait for ever.

What is your difficulty? Is it weakness dejected, or is it strength become froward? Is it poverty anxious, or riches boastful? Is it ignorance, or is it learning, that makes you doubt? To whatever class you belong be sure there have been those who have gone before you who have had such a cross to bear, and have borne it manfully, and triumphantly; but they were not observers of the wind. Before them lay their desired country; beyond were the Delectable Mountains; and they were but ill-armed, ill-fed, ill-disciplined; and yet it was not held too severe a condition that they should go out against the Amalekites, that they should grapple with the Anakim giants of portentous stature; for, said they, "If the Lord delight in us, he will bring us into this land." You have seen the small boat mount each rising wave, avoiding danger and difficulty by giving little or no resistance. The great steamer, however, overcomes the obstacle by breaking through it—a sheer, undeviating, front attack. So must many of the Christians obstacles be confronted. They must be overcome by being endured. The higher life must not be regulated by prudential maxims; its touchstone must be duty. We must not even limit our actions by forecasts of success or failure, any more than by considerations of danger or difficulty. Duty as much impels us to maintain the Christian faith in a crooked generation, to strive, though it were in vain, to redeem the world from its condemnation, as it impelled the Uhlans to face certain death on the steeps of Gravelotte. In these things we are not to be observers of the wind, for the issue of them lies at the bidding of a higher will than ours.

Not, let us say, by way of conclusion, that we doubt the result of honest Christian effort, wherever, and whenever put forth. Let the wind sit in what quarter it may, we are to cast our bread upon the waters in fullest confidence that we shall find it after many days. Even the weakest will not permit difficulties to deter him, when he knows that success, though perhaps not in form and incidence, after his expectation, yet is assured him of God.

Leytonstone. W. PIERCE.

WORK AMONG THE MASSES.

I.—GIVE HIM A CHANCE.

LET me say once for all, that in these brief sketches which I have undertaken to write for this *Magazine* I shall have to use assumed names. The reasons for this course will, I think, be obvious to most readers. The persons of whom I shall have to write are, most of them, at work for the Master; and I do not care, in any way, to call attention to them. My object is to illustrate the difficulties of workers among the toiling masses, and to show how easy it is for men to get into trouble; whilst at the same time I may set forth how hard it is rescue some from the power of evil habits, and save them from lives of suffering and shame.

The most interesting, and in some respects, to me, the most pleasing case I have had to do with, was that of James Holmes, a Birmingham youth, whose story I will tell in a very few words.

Several years ago, a member of my church came to see me by arrangement in my private vestry at Highbury chapel. The member was an elderly woman, of that type which, I can best describe as the kindly, sympathetic, motherly sort of lady. She came to talk with me about a rather painful case, and one in which she was somewhat interested. She told me a sad tale of shame and grief, which was in substance as follows:—

James Holmes was a young man who had been brought up in a very respectable working man's home. His father had held a somewhat responsible position, and was a good sort of man. His mother was an industrious, kind, good woman, who lived for her home and family. When he was grown, James, in spite of his mother's earnest entreaties and prayers, took bad ways. He associated with fast youths, whose characters were, to say the least, very bad, and who spent a great deal more money than it was possible for them to spare out of their own honest earnings. James was a well-meaning youth, with good intentions, but far too easily led by such a gang as that with which he became connected. In their hands he was simply a tool. Very soon he and they were in some unlawful and dishonest "long firm" transaction. But his companions played with him the game commonly described as "heads I win, tails you lose." That is to say,

matters were so manipulated that, if their scheme should succeed, they would have the gain, and if it failed James would bear the loss. And so it turned out.

I will not, and need not, occupy space, in describing the transaction. It is sufficient to say, that the game did not succeed. James was apprehended, tried, found guilty, and sentenced to eighteen months' imprisonment. The reader can readily imagine the grief and shame which the family had now to endure, especially the poor mother.

When in prison, he had ample time for reflection. He did reflect. He thought what a fool he had been, and resolved that, when he gained his liberty, he would make much better use of it than he had done before. His time wore slowly on, but one morning the massive doors of the prison swung back, and he walked out to liberty, and, as he had resolved, to a better life.

But he little knew what was in store for him. He had no conception of the long, hard trial which was before him. He got a situation, but he had not had it long before some one told his employer that he had a "gaol bird" in his shop. That was enough. He was instantly dismissed. After a time he managed to get another place. Again his employer heard of the prison, and again James was dismissed. A third time this happened to him. Unable, without a character and with the stain of the prison upon him, to get another place, he tried to enlist for a soldier; but, through some defect in his sight, he was rejected. He talked of emigration to a new land, that he might make a fresh start. Of this his mother would not hear. For eighteen long months after he left the gaol, he walked the streets in search of employment, and could not get it. His old associates had often met him, and tried to get him back to their wicked ways; but he refused all their overtures, and declared he would die of hunger in a ditch before he would again be dishonest.

"Now, sir," said the good woman, who introduced the matter to me, "I have come to see if you can possibly get any of the employers whom you know to 'give him a chance.'"

That is the first little chapter in this brief sketch, and sad enough it is. It abounds with lessons and warnings if we had space to enlarge upon them. If these lines should fall under the eye of any young man, I trust he will see in them a warning against *fast life*, against *bad company*, and against *the first step in* the *thorny paths of sin*. Just think of it. A young man, willing to work, determined to be honest and do right, resolved to be true, but dismissed, scorned, despised, because he had been to prison. No one would trust him. No one would employ him. Perhaps some employer of labour may see these lines. If so, I hope the sequel to this little story may convince him that it is not always wise to turn one's back upon a youth who has been in gaol, if that be his *only* fault.

I was interested, asked that James should write me a letter, and then come and see me. He wrote; the letter was long. It was written in a very good, clear hand, much better than I expected to

see. He told me his story. Then he came and saw me. I shall not forget the interview very soon. He had sinned; he knew that; and he had suffered, and was suffering. He wanted no charity; his parents had kept him, and were willing to do so; but he did not want to eat the bread of idleness. "What will I work at? Anything, sir; anything, if it be honest. I will gladly sweep the streets, or break stones, or go errands, or do anything. What wages will I want? Anything, nothing, if only I can get a place, and win back confidence; get a character, and then earn my own bread." All this, and much more, was said in such an earnest, and yet humble spirit, that I at once believed him.

I sent the letter which he had written to me to a gentleman in Birmingham, a large employer, whom I happened to know to be a kind, good, God-fearing man, a man who takes a deep and genuine interest in the poor. He was once poor himself; and though rich now, very rich, he has not forgotten his former poverty, nor lost his sympathy for men. Would that this were true of all our rich men. Then I went to see him; and after I had been to see the firm for whom James had worked, and from whose service he had been dismissed, and thus ascertained the truth of his statement, this employer determined to "*give him a chance.*" In in order to remove him entirely from old scenes, old companions, and old temptations, he decided to send him to the far north. He would pay him sufficient on which to live in comfort, and advance him as he showed himself worthy. He was despatched at Christmas time, and went with a hopeful heart. I at once wrote to the secretary of the Young Men's Christian Association of the town to which he was sent, and asked him to send some of his young men to invite him to their meetings, and find him some sort of good occupation for his evening hours, and for Sundays as well; but I gave him no sort of hint by which he could know anything of the past life of James. This the secretary did. He had not been long in the new home before he was shoulder deep in good work. He began by assisting at the free breakfast movement. Then he assisted at prayer meetings in cottages; then at services in lodging houses. Before long he was engaged in speaking in the open air, and at length began to take part in Gospel temperance meetings.

Several Christmasses have come and gone since my friend "gave him a chance," and he is still there as true as ever. He has had more than one advance of salary, and has won back for himself a character which is of the highest. He has corresponded with me at intervals all the time he has been in the far north, and the last letter I received from him told me that he was going to be married to a Christian woman, and that both he and she would be members of —— Congregational Church.

To have been permitted to take even the smallest part in the salvation of such a young man is a good thing. Of him now I have but little fear, for he has learned the true way to the cross. There is perfect strength and safety in that way.

Birmingham. CHAS. LEACH.

THE POET'S PAGE.

GIVEN AND TAKEN.

By JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER.

[For this, the latest production of the greatest of the living poets of America, we are indebted to the *New York Independent*. The piece was specially written by Mr. Whittier for its Christmas number; and we are glad to enrich our pages with this sample of the exquisite fruit which the venerable Quaker bard is continuing to bring forth in his old age.]

SMOOTHING soft the nestling head
Of a maiden fancy-led,
Thus the grave-eyed woman said:

"Richest gifts are those we make,
Dearer than the love we take
That we give for love's own sake.

"Well I know the heart's unrest;
Mine has been the common quest
To be loved and therefore blest.

"Favours undeserved are mine;
At my feet as on a shrine
Love has laid its gifts divine.

"Sweet the offerings seemed, and yet
With their sweetness came regret,
And a sense of unpaid debt.

"Heart of mine unsatisfied,
Was it vanity or pride
That a deeper joy denied?

"Hands that ope but to receive
Empty close; they only live
Richly who can richly give.

"Still," she sighed, with moistening eyes,
"Love is sweet in any guise;
But its best is sacrifice!

"He who, giving, does not crave
Likest is to Him who gave
Life itself the loved to save.

"Love that self-forgetful gives
Sows surprise of ripened sheaves,
Late or soon its own receives."

ON LAYING THE MEMORIAL STONE OF A NEW CHURCH.

[The following hymn, by Maurice Baxter, was sung for the first time, on January 7th, at Rhyl, on the occasion of laying the Memorial Stones of the new Congregational Church and Lecture Hall.]

OF old all earth was hallowed ground;
Thy servant, Lord, of old,
A House of God, a Bethel found,
Amidst the stony wold.
And yet again Thy presence came
To temple and to tent;
Thy Spirit with His breath of flame,
A cloud of fire was sent.

For Thee a dwelling-place we raise;
Unveil Thy presence here;
In answer to our prayer and praise,
In glorious form appear.
Resplendent in Thy servants' sight,
To contrite hearts revealed,
The careless miss Thy glory bright,
The sinful eyes are sealed.

This earthly dwelling will not last,
How can we build for Thee?
Eternity, a temple vast,
Thine only house can be.
The stars are dust beneath Thy feet
The shining worlds decay;
Where will the Lord Eternal meet
His creatures of a day?

Christ, Thy creating hands alone
The holy house can build;
Thy quarry is the living stone,
The hearts Thy grace has filled.
From age to age the walls divine
Are rising firm and well;
Unite us in Thy great design,
Then, Lord, descend and dwell.

AMEN.

"Hark the Glad Sound."

Chorus (*Repeated after verses* 3 *and* 5)

Allegretto. WEBBE.

1. Hark the glad sound, the Sa - viour comes, The Sa - viour pro - mised long;..... Let ev - 'ry heart pre - pare a throne, And ev - 'ry voice a song,..... And ev - 'ry voice a song.

QUARTET. *Andante.*

2. He comes the pris - 'ners to re - lease, In Sa - tan's bon - dage held; The gates of brass be - fore Him burst, The i - ron fet - ters yield.
3. He comes from thick - est films of vice, To clear the men - tal ray, And on the eye - balls of the blind To pour ce - les - tial day.
4. He comes the bro - ken heart to bind, The bleed - ing soul to cure, And with the trea - sures of His grace, To en - rich the hum - ble poor.
5. Our glad ho - san - nas, Prince of Peace, Thy wel - come shall pro - claim; And heaven's e - ter - nal ar - ches ring With Thy be - lov - ed name

APPLES OF GOLD.

By J. Jackson Wray.

II.—A STRANGE QUESTION.*

ANY of the psalms of David are attached to some particular circumstance in his own history, such as his exile in the caves, or his remorse for the sin of Uriah's murder; but others are not to be so definitely located. We cannot find a birthplace for them, and we do not know what were the particular experiences that evoked the song. And this is quite as well. This psalm, for instance, is a most useful psalm to us; but if we knew exactly what straits the psalmist was in when he sang it—being quite sure that in some respects they would be different from ours—we should be most likely led to say, "Yes, that was all very well in his case, but mine is different," and so foolishly rob ourselves of the message of warning and encouragement it contains. Now that we know nothing more about it than that it was put here for us, we feel that we can accept it, apply it, and get the honey out of it with the perfect assurance that it meets our case exactly. This is our psalm.

"How long wilt thou forget me, O Lord?" David must have been in a bad way when he said that. The cloud must have been a black one that not only hindered him from seeing God, but made him think that God Himself neither wanted to see him nor to be seen by him. "Forget me." The words imply that He had known him, had befriended him, had remembered him, had smiled upon him and made him glad. Now the Lord is gone, and gone he thinks so entirely that He has forgotten him, and left him to the terrible hopelessness of the soul that has no God. I wonder what was amiss with David here.

Had he been wilfully sinning against God? That may account for his darkness; for sin is as black as a thundercloud, and can blot out the sun even at mid-day. Or was he just then the subject of a strong temptation? It is one of the cleverest devices of the devil to try to make the Lord's people believe that God has something a great deal bigger and better to do than to think upon such poor things as they. Or was he in circumstances of great personal trouble and pain? Bitter grief is a sad extinguisher, and makes sad havoc of human hopes and joys.

But whatever may have been the cause of this wail of despair, David was wrong. If his sins troubled him, God delighted in mercy. He would blot out his sins like a cloud, and his transgressions like a thick cloud. If it were sore temptation, God had declared that He would not only strengthen him in the contest, but deliver him from the power of the enemy. If it were great grief and sorrow that distressed him, he knew who had said that "if sorrow

* "How long wilt Thou forget me, O Lord? for ever? how long wilt Thou hide Thy face from me?"—Ps. xiii. 1.

endureth for a night, joy cometh in the morning"; so that it was a mistake to get into the slough of despond at all. But the foolish man must not only wade into the slough, but he must get right into the middle of it, and charge Omniscience with "forgetting," and not only so, but with the intention of forgetting him "for ever." As if the Infinite could forget! In other and wiser moments, David could talk of an eye that neither slumbers nor sleeps, of a mercy that "forgetteth not the cry of the humble," and of a faithfulness that remembers His covenant with His people for ever!

We will not condemn the psalmist too strongly, for we are touched with the same folly ourselves, and are weak enough to fall into the same sin. Forget! A mother may forget her sucking child, may fail to have compassion on the son of her womb! "Yet will I never forget thee!" The fact is, the forgetting was all on the other side. A drunken man is always ready to impeach the sobriety of those who remonstrate with him. It was David that had forgotten—forgotten the covenant, forgotten past experience, forgotten the promises, forgotten the changeless attributes of God. He carefully put the shutters up and pulled down the blinds, and then complained that the sun refused to shine! Or like the child that runs away to hide himself, and straightway finding himself alone and in a dark corner, cries aloud that he has lost his mother! Let us depend on this: whenever we feel inclined to mourn that our God has forgotten us, we shall do well to look within and see how our memory has served us about Him. When we are inclined to charge Him with forsaking us, we shall do well to ponder the path of our feet, and see whether the forsaking is not the declining of our own feet from the covenant of God. And ever and always let us be sure of this—

> There is no need for faithful souls in doubt to fear and fret:
> Thy God is thine for ever, and never can forget.
> Remember Him, cling close to Him. If thou forget Him not,
> Thy soul in safety lives, for thou shalt never be forgot.

"How long wilt Thou hide Thy face from me?" It would seem as though the first hard, harsh, despairing and complaining sentence was scarcely uttered before the psalmist discovers that if he pulls that string any further it will break. Hence this expression, though full of complaining, is far more rational. God may "hide His face from him," without having forgotten him. I have known a mother do that for the very pleasure of hearing her child call her by her name, and of waking in the child a richer delight in discovering her smiling face once more. Or when the child has eagerly made friends with a stranger, or has willingly left her arms to be nursed by others, I have known her simulate grief, and hide her face, and even repel the relenting advances of her little one; but it has all been with a view to have full recompense of delight in the manifest joy of the child to come back to its happy quarters, with the consciousness that there is no other such a nestling place in all the world.

I can understand, too, a parent hiding his face when fault or dis-

obedience has come between; then the frown sits on the brow, or the back is turned, more in sorrow than in anger, but only to quicken the sense of sorrow in the wrong-doer, and to extract more speedily the confession of the fault and the cry for forgiveness. In such wise God may hide His face from His people; but His heart, His love, His care, His delight in them is all the same, and His one purpose is to bring them into nearer, dearer, more delightful union and communion with Himself.

My soul is sad, and I,
In piteous case,
Do nurse my grief and cry,
"God hides His face!"

All in the dark I walk,
Nor path can trace;
I grope and, tearful, talk
Of that hid face.

I seek, but cannot find
His soothing grace;
Clouds deepen, and behind
He hides His face!

Only a little while,
A little space
Of testing, then a smile
From that dear face!

My Father would enfold
In His embrace
His child, and so I'm told
He hides His face.

He hides Himself, but when
With quickened pace
I seek and follow, then
He shows His face.

"How long?" "How long?" Though the departures of God, the hidings of His face, the intervenings of darkness and care are never final, yet they are fearsome, and, though they are only temporary, they are trying. And, as a rule, we are poor hands at waiting. The times and seasons He keeps in His own power. We should dearly like to have them in ours, and regulate the clock as we like. But He knoweth what is best both as to the character of our trial and the length of its duration. As to the burden, it shall never be heavier than we are able to bear; and as to the distance we have to carry it, it shall not be an inch further than is needful to work out the gracious purposes which, for our sakes, He has in view.

It is marvellous how slowly time passes when we are in trouble! A week in prison is longer than a month at liberty. And so in the day of darkness we cry, "How long? How long?" And the answer is, "Trust in the Lord, for He will save you." He that tarrieth will come and will not tarry. That seems strange. He is called He that tarrieth, and yet it is said that He will come and will not tarry. What does it mean? This. To thy impatient eye He tarrieth, that the moral discipline may have time to do its work; but when the moment comes that the thorn may be extracted, the burden lifted, the cloud scattered, the rod laid by; then He will not tarry, but fly to our relief.

But though He often keeps His people waiting, waiting, waiting, He never comes too late. Abraham's arm was stayed before the sacrificial knife drank Isaac's blood. Jesus came walking on the sea, and brought the ship to land in safety, though the fourth watch had come before He appeared. Peter's chains were loosed, and he stood free beneath the stars, though he had lain in jail till within a few hours of the time of his execution. God never comes too late!

"How long? How long?" That is a common cry. We may often shorten the time by faith, penitence, and prayer. We may shorten the time by receiving gifts of grace, by granting gifts and doing deeds of good; and as for the rest, Wait, wait, I say, upon the Lord!

Have faith in God, my friend,
And patient be;
For every trial in the end
Shall bring to thee
A triumph, which shall tend
To set thee free,
To fit thee with thy Lord to spend
Eternity!

CONGREGATIONAL NONCONFORMITY.

CHRISTMAS "Annuals" are not confined to the orthodox story books with their illustrations. There are ecclesiastical "Annuals" which, at this season of the year, make their appearance. Though their contents may not be so interesting, to some, as most of the yearly publications, yet they have no small interest for their special constituencies.

Among these the *Congregational Year Book* (published by Hodder & Stoughton), with its nearly 500 octavo pages, occupies no unimportant position. The edition for 1884 had a larger circulation than its immediate predecessors, and special reasons will probably make the sale for the present year still larger.

A few months ago, Mr. S. Morley, M.P., in a speech delivered at the Memorial Hall, quoted a statement to which wide publicity had been given, as to the decline of Nonconformity, or rather as to its failing to increase proportionately with the population. Special reference was made to the accommodation provided for religious worship by the Congregational communion, which was said to be considerably below what might have been fairly expected.

To obtain "accurate and authoritative" information from Congregational Churches, some of which are not only indifferent to statistics, but regard them with "positive hostility," is no easy matter. But, a few months ago, the attempt was made "to ascertain with exactness the number of sittings provided" in every Congregational Church in England and Wales. The answers are tabulated in the *Year Book*, and as only 8 per cent of the whole had failed, up to December 20th, to make returns, the figures may be regarded as being both "accurate and authoritative;" for, in each case, "care" was urged so as "to ascertain with exactness the number of sittings required."

The result is most significant, for, whilst in the religious census of 1851 the number of places of worship credited to the Congregational body in England and Wales was 3,244, with 1,002,507 sittings, yet, at the present time, there are no less than 4,347

churches, with a total sitting accommodation of 1,568,357. Nearly one-fourth of the churches (1,022) are in the Principality of Wales, with 336,051 sittings. Thus, in the thirty-three years which have elapsed since the last religious census was taken, no less than 1,103 new buildings have been erected and accommodation provided for 565,850 additional persons; showing an increase of over 50 per cent. for that period, or an average increase of over 33 buildings and 17,147 sittings per annum.

The tables, showing the accommodation in each county, are as follows:—

ENGLAND.

Association.	No. of Chrches.	Accommodation.	No. of Stations.	Accommodation.	Total Accommodation.
Bedfordshire	14	7,587	13	1,846	9,433
Berkshire, S. Oxon and S. Bucks	47	17,998	31	3,604	21,602
Buckinghamshire, North ...	19	6,772	29	4,075	10,847
Cambridgeshire	31	13,149	3	300	13,449
Cheshire	53	24,885	17	3,491	28,376
Cornwall	19	6,266	3	376	6,642
Cumberland	20	8,171	9	800	8,971
Derbyshire	44	16,165	14	1,977	18,142
Devonshire	67	29,748	68	9,194	38,942
Dorsetshire	31	10,974	20	3,022	13,996
Durham and Northumberland	47	21,321	21	3,234	24,555
Essex	102	49,682	72	8,486	58,168
Gloucestershire & Herefordshire	106	45,392	52	7,358	52,750
Hampshire	54	26,716	46	6,051	32,767
Hertfordshire	37	13,312	21	2,365	15,677
Huntingdonshire	17	6,900	10	1,840	8,740
Kent...	82	38,789	38	4,942	43,731
Lancashire	233	139,273	59	15,266	154,539
Leicestershire and Rutland ...	31	13,026	41	6,437	19,463
Lincolnshire	28	11,023	10	1,635	12,658
Middlesex	135	110,933	135	38,951	149,884
Monmouth (English)	38	15,849	nil	—	15,849
,, (Welsh)	35	18,033	2	302	18,335
Norfolk	32	13,832	20	2,724	16,556
Northamptonshire...	34	13,374	24	2,463	15,837
Nottinghamshire	21	11,436	19	3,178	14,614
Shropshire	47	12,103	12	1,633	13,736
Somerset	52	17,356	52	5,577	22,933
Staffordshire (South)	32	14,853	17	2,998	17,851
,, (North)	24	9,295	2	600	9,895
Suffolk	51	25,143	59	6,072	31,215
Surrey	84	50,518	34	4,706	55,224
Sussex	47	19,822	48	5,626	25,448
Warwickshire...	60	28,481	26	2,995	31,476
Wilts and East Somerset ...	58	19,445	19	2,900	22,345
Worcestershire	19	8,405	13	1,343	9,748
Yorkshire	233	137,414	67	14,491	151,905
Total for England ...	2,084	1,033,441	1,126	182,858	1,216,299

WALES—(including English Churches).

Association.	No. of Chrches.	Accommodation.	No. of Stations.	Accommodation.	Total Accommodation.
Anglesea	24	7,997	16	2,956	10,953
Carnarvonshire	60	20,503	35	8,085	28,588
Denbighshire and Flintshire..	60	15,262	13	1,967	17,229
Merionethshire	54	13,641	10	811	14,452
Montgomeryshire	44	8,540	16	1,040	9,580
North Wales (English)	52	13,270	2	150	13,420
Breconshire	25	5,753	23	4,388	10,141
Cardiganshire	38	16,995	32	7,917	24,912
Carmarthenshire	74	34,060	32	8,176	42,236
Glamorganshire	170	90,210	43	11,962	102,172
" (English) ...	56	25,750	1	25	25,775
Pembrokeshire	33	10,724	10	1,650	12,374
South Pembrokeshire	22	8,612	15	2,218	10,830
Radnorshire	7	1,540	4	580	2,120
Total for Wales	719	272,857	252	51,925	324,782

It will be seen that the figures in the tables are somewhat below the totals given above, as they include certified statements received from 166 mission stations, of which the *Year Book* contains no record, and at which accommodation is provided for 27,276 persons.

In Scotland there are 102 churches in addition to the above, and in Ireland 29, with a large number of evangelistic stations in both countries, while there are 11 more in the islands of the British seas. This brings up the total number of Congregational churches in the United Kingdom to nearly 4,500.

Of these, the number of "vacant" churches is comparatively small; in England there are only 171; in Scotland, 9; and in Ireland, 2. In Wales, where settled pastorates are not so general as in England, there are 139 vacancies, including English churches in the principality and Welsh churches in England.

The rate of increase has been more than kept up during the past year, for no less than 59 new chapels have been erected and two rebuilt, while the foundation stones of a number of others have been laid.

The total number of pastors is not given, but it appears that, while 59 died during the year, no less than 96 were received into the Congregational ministry. Cf these 73 passed through one or other of the Theological Colleges or Institutes, while 13 were received from the ministry of other communions, chiefly Presbyterian and Methodist. It should be added that 7 left the Congregational ministry for other denominations.

The Metropolitan summary shows that in the area covered by the London Congregational Union there are 252 churches, and 164 mission rooms and preaching stations, in addition; with 227 ministers in charge, and five "lay-pastors."

Such figures cannot but be deemed satisfactory; and it is hoped that the securing and publishing of similar returns from each of the leading religious bodies, may tend to show progress, not less satisfactory, in coping with the ever-growing needs of our increasing population.

It is only right to add, that the *Congregational Year Book* contains a large amount of information, which will be of special interest to the members of the Union, by which it is published. Not only are the addresses delivered from its "Chair" and the minutes of its Assembly furnished, but also obituary notices of ministers who died during the year, views and descriptions of new buildings erected, notices of over 150 societies and institutions, together with a list of the churches, arranged in their counties, with the date of their formation, the postal address of Congregational ministers in the United Kingdom, and other information useful to all our pastors and church officers.

Rhyl. D. BURFORD HOOKE.

JAMES HERBERT'S DIARY;

Or, Experiences with Seekers after God.

By the Rev. ROBERT TUCK, B.A., Author of "Netley Independent Chapel," "Links Wanted," &c.

I.—INTRODUCTORY.

WHETHER a man be a minister of the Gospel, or a teacher in a Sunday-school, his modes of dealing with "inquirers" will be found to depend on two things:—1, the doctrinal ideas, about the beginnings of a Christian life, which are prominent at a particular time; and 2, the precise religious experience through which he has himself been led. Most persons who try to help young seekers think somewhat in this way—"There is a definite experience through which this young soul ought to pass; and it should be very nearly like that which I have myself passed through."

Five and thirty years ago James Herbert had no difficulty in discovering the proper set of experiences suitable to the time of conversion. The stages were well defined; the points of hindrance were well known; the exact shape in which saving truth had to be apprehended was distinctly arranged; examples of conversion were given in Christian biography; and James' "Anxious Inquirer" was the universal guide.

Our readers have been already introduced to Herbert, and will expect to hear that he showed early signs of thoughtfulness and interest in divine things. Surrounded from the outset of life by Christian influences, he was nevertheless checked from personal decision by the sentiments which prevailed in his circle, that

experience must be clearly defined, and that it could not be known until he had reached at least sixteen or eighteen years of age.

Herbert set himself to watch for and win definite experiences. He was expected to have a strong, deep, and humbling sense of sin; but here came his first stumbling-block. He was one of those quiet youths who do not get into much mischief, and whose sins are subtle things of cherished feeling, rather than open acts of disobedience, whose evil character is revealed by their punishments. He could get some sense of sin in general by studying what the Bible says about it, and believing that; but such self-examination as would bring to light the subtle evils of his own heart were quite beyond the youth, and in writing bitter things against himself he only convicted himself of insincerity.

Then he was expected to believe one particular representation of the great work of atonement, and was told that he would find peace by resting on the "finished work." And he tried, and persuaded himself that he had succeeded; but somehow the *figure* of the Lord Jesus Christ always seemed to stand before the *work*, and he could never get out of sight the winsomely beseeching attitude of Jesus, who seemed to say, "Cannot you trust *Me?*" And one day there was a stranger in the pulpit at the old chapel; a man who did not say things because they were the usual and proper things, but who said things because God had shown him the truth of them. Herbert was surprised at the short but striking text, "By faith that is *in Me*," and he listened, heart-opened, to every word that fell from the minister's lips that night. It was very simple, but most wise and effective in its simplicity. The minister did but set Jesus forth, in one and another of His aspects and offices, and then plead again and again, saying, "Cannot you trust *Him*, and give heart and life to *Him?*" And to Herbert it seemed as if that figure of Jesus, which he so long had seen, now pleaded with a last and overwhelming persuasiveness; and when the service closed with the hymn, "O Lamb of God, I come," all was over, all was settled with Herbert. Jesus Himself had won him, and at his bedside that night he did but seal over himself to Jesus, in solemn vows, body, soul, and spirit, for life and for ever. He had entered the wicket gate, but not just in the usual and orderly way.

That experience fixed one thing in his mind which gave tone and character to all his ministry, and to all his dealings with seeking souls. It assured him that the workings of the Divine Spirit are *sovereignly free;* we must not dare to make moulds in which His operations must run; we must humbly, but keenly, watch for the signs of His presence, and find our success in simply following His lead. And Herbert became in after years a skilful winner of souls; a safe guide for many seekers in that transition time, which has not yet closed, when the "old order is changing, giving place to new."

Herbert had been greatly influenced by the reading of that wise and valuable book, Abbott's "Young Christian," and was led by it to commence a diary, the first entry being dated the day of the Duke of Wellington's funeral, and containing a youth's pious

moralisings on that great event. In accordance with the sentiment of the time, the diary consisted largely of attempts at self-examination, and reports of the state of 'feelings'; but Herbert soon discovered the unhealthiness of all this, and the danger of falling away from simple following of Christ to satisfaction in his own mere frames and feelings. He discovered that he was always happier if he found something to groan about, and felt miserable if he could not write concerning his sins and shortcomings. So the character of his diary changed, and he wisely determined to make it a daily record of studies and meditations in God's Word; and from that change his religious life entered upon a brighter and cheerier stage. He was every day learning something more of Jesus; "looking off from himself unto Jesus," and he found out that the way of growth and peace was just the way in which he found life at first, not troubling about "experience," but filling thoughts and heart with the knowledge and the love of Christ.

When Herbert became a minister, he still kept up his diary; only then his life was so much fuller of facts and incidents, that these naturally took the first place. His great interest in young seekers, and the literary and philosophical turn of mind, which our readers will have already recognised, led him to put in his diary details of cases of inquiry with which he had to do, or of which he could get particulars from his ministerial friends. These cases he wrote out in conversational style, not with the idea of ever publishing them, but solely to satisfy the literary sentiment which ruled him so strongly. From these diaries we are permitted to take a few specimens, selecting the cases which seem to be most representative, and which bring to view the particular forms of hindrance, or mistake, with which ministers and teachers have in these days to do.

Religious inquirers are treated now in very different ways by different classes of helpers; and we may do good service if we can suggest to parents, teachers, and pastors, some of the forms in which religious anxiety first shows itself in our day, and can indicate wise ways in which it can be nourished and guided. Some incline to say that we had better leave religions seekers alone, and let the Spirit of God work His good work without human interferences; but we would earnestly urge that we can be wise and efficient "handmaids" to the Spirit, if we will wait and watch for His leadings. Some still demand, from all inquirers, suddenness, manifestation of feeling, definiteness of experience, and, therefore, often fail to observe the more delicate signs of the Spirit's working, and often hinder those whom they desire to help, by expecting from them impossible things. Some still confuse the intellectual acceptance of particular truths with the heart acceptance of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself; but many are still able to see that wise Christian help can foster and guide seeking souls, without mischievously interfering with the individuality of experience, or forcing the free movement of human hearts towards God into any moulds of man's devising.

THE YOUNG FOLK'S CORNER.

START THEM RIGHT.

THE little girl's name was Edith. The year she was born, the church which her parents attended adopted the plan of weekly offerings for benevolence. The parents said to themselves, "Why should not the baby give as well as we? Let us pledge her for one cent a week, and when she is two years old, let it be two cents a week, and so on. We will, at least, start the child right and keep her right as long as she remains with us, in the hope that, after twenty-five years of such training as this, she will not depart from the good old Scripture method of systematic Christian giving."

The suggestion was adopted, and the mother began to carry, each Sunday, an envelope for the baby. It was not long before the treasurer's wife, who had a child of the same age, discovered that Edith was a regular contributor to the charities of the church, and soon anther baby was holding up its tiny hand, and flashing a ray of gospel light into the dense darkness of heathen lands Many other children were contributing weekly, but none so young as these two.

Shortly after, Edith's parents moved to another town, and the church where they worshipped had no weekly offering. This was a great trial to the little girl, for she was now old enough to carry her envelope herself. Every Sunday she begged for her "ombeloke," nor could she understand why she might not carry it. "Were the missionaries all dead?" "Had the heathen children all heard of Jesus?" She had not long to wait, however; for soon the church voted to adopt the weekly offerings, and no child was ever happier over a new doll than was Edith when her old habit was resumed. In the meeting at which the plan was discussed, Edith's father, without mentioning any names, described the way in which she was being trained in Christian benevolence.

The idea seemed to please the young parents of the congregation, for when the pledges came in, out of many which were handed in by children, several were for amounts corresponding to the age of the giver. The charities of the church were at once increased by about one hundred per cent., and the next year they were larger still. But nothing is more gratifying to the pastor than the manifest interest of certain parents to train their children, from the very outset, to systematic and conscientious giving.

Oh, for more Christian homes in which children are taught to respond cheerfully to every appeal of the Master. If all parents would *start* their children right, the next generation would not so often read the sad story, "Treasury absolutely empty."

Manchester, Ct. H. W. P.

THE TEACHERS' PAGE.

INTERNATIONAL LESSONS FOR JANUARY.

PAUL AT JERUSALEM.

The lessons for this month deal with Acts xxi. 15-40; xxii. 1-21; xxiii. 1-16; and are entirely concerned with the incidents of Paul's visit to Jerusalem. They show us his relations with the elders of the Jewish-Christian Church; with the bigoted Jewish party; and with the Roman captain. Last month we were set upon estimating the power of *character*, as illustrated in the great Apostle; and now we see that our character may get *testings* of a peculiarly sudden, unexpected, and overwhelming kind. It is true that Paul had a feeling that troubles awaited him at Jerusalem, but he had no idea of the *way* in which they would arise, or of the *form* which they would take. He had to be "always ready," by keeping up his trust in God, just as we have. The *unwatchful* are always in danger of being "overtaken in a fault."

Looking over these chapters we observe Paul, half suspected by the Christian elders; induced to enter into a questionable compromise in the hope of disarming prejudice; endeavouring to keep himself quiet amid the excitements of the feast-time; suddenly made the occasion of a riot; separated from his friends; in peril of his life; rescued by the Roman guard; but still the object of unrelenting enmity, and shameful plottings.

The point for us to observe is, that all this made *a new set of circumstances*, and tested Paul's Christian character in new ways. Reminding us that life is constantly providing for us all new scenes, new relations, new difficulties, and new duties; and our ability to meet them all does not lie in the *experience* which we have gained, but in the *grace* which lies ever at our command. Fresh things may very easily surprise us, but they can never surprise our God, and never take shape for which His grace cannot be precisely fitted.

Compare these circumstances with the dangers of travel, oppositions of the heathen, and persecutions of the Judaising party, which Paul had previously known. Now he was in the very centre of religious fanaticism, amidst foes determined to secure his death. God was pleased to let ordinary events work without His miraculous intervention. His Providence brought round the rescue of Paul: but the Apostle was left to the exercise of his own wit and prudence. He was again and again called to speak and act when there was not a moment's time for thought or prayer. We cannot wonder greatly if he made a slip, and let temper for a moment get the better of him; but we cannot help admiring the self-command he usually showed, and the skill with which he acted under most perplexing and anxious circumstances.

As teachers, we have to show how Paul's Christian character stood this new and severe kind of testing. And the hesitation and mistrust of the Christian elders must have been quite as trying to impulsive, generous Paul, as was the open malice of his Jewish foes. We may illustrate such points as the following:—1. *Considerateness for the weakness of others*, shown in carrying out the compromising suggestions of the elders. 2. *Self-control*, shown in his speech from the stairs. 3. *Practical wisdom*, shown in taking advantage of his rights as a Roman citizen. 4. *Failure of temper under sudden provocation*, shown in hasty speech to the high priest. Persons liable to passion should never allow themselves to *speak* until they have *thought* and *prayed*. 5. *Playfulness, with a little malice in it*, shown in setting the Council quarrelling by suggesting the question of the Resurrection. *Farrar* thinks this was unworthy of Paul; but we see in it a playful rebound from the temper he was in, with a sort of pleasure in thus confounding his enemies. The scene before the Council is one of the weakest bits in a truly noble life. Paul was not his true, best self while there.

We see, in him, that we must not cease to be prompt, prudent, wise, and practical, because we are Christians. We learn, also, that the best of us may fail; and especially are we liable to fail before the slanderer. The great thing is, have we grace to acknowledge our faults; and do our failings humble us to a fuller reliance on daily strength and grace? Even Paul failed a little; the Lord Jesus failed *never*.

ROBERT TUCK.

THE BEAUTY OF HOLINESS.

I love Thy skies and sunny mists,
  Thy fields, Thy mountains hoar,
Thy wind that bloweth where it lists,—
  Thy will, I love it more.

I love Thy hidden Truth to seek
  All round, in sea, or shore;
The arts whereby like gods we speak—
  Thy will to me is more.

I love Thy men and women, Lord;
  Thy children round Thy door:
Calm thoughts that inward strength afford—
  Thy will, O Lord, is more.

But when Thy will my life doth hold,
  Thine to the very core;
The world, which that same will did mould,
  I shall love ten times more.

GEORGE MACDONALD.

THE LORD'S WORKERS MUST BE SENT.

THE saints are God's clergy. And God's clergy are all apostles, or men *sent*. Throughout our churches, many Christians are realising the need of a thorough personal preparation, if God is to work through them and to bless them and others. Upon the extent and Scripturalness of these preparations depends the hope of a general awakening.

If God is to work through us, He must send us. What if one goes before he is sent! The elements of a full consecration are simple. Looking from our present point of view, they are two: the consecrated man goes on God's mission; he is sent on God's mission. The two ideas are expressed in the consecration of the prophet Isaiah in the Temple in a form brief, and yet as complete as they could well be combined, "*Here am I; send me.*" In the Temple he had his vision. He heard the voice of God. It came home to him. There is a great work to be done in this land. Some man must be consecrated to do it. Then, further, it came home to him, *I* am the man to whom God speaks. I must go. I will go. And he bowed himself and said, "Lord, here I am." He consecrated himself to the service with fear and trembling, but with a resolution to undertake it, whatever it should be. Then, as the work loomed upon him in its indefinite and vast outlines, as he realised that it was a divine task, requiring the divine strength,

the divine wisdom, it came home to him, further, that it was not sufficient for him to consecrate himself. He must be consecrated. It was not enough to go, he must be sent.

This prayer contains these two views—that he must consecrate himself, and he must be consecrated by God. There is always danger that one who would prepare for God's service shall realise only the first element in consecration—*his* part; that it shall seem to him sufficient that he be ready to go. This consecration prayer ends with the "Here am I!" Hence, as an explanation, so much running to and fro, so much exhortation, so much turning of the Bible, so much zeal, so much prayer, without fruit. Has the brother been sent? A matter which should be easily and immediately ascertainable. At least one man should know. Has he prayed, "Consecrate me to Thy service, Lord"? The consecrated man is always commissioned. He will not be left in doubt whether God accepts his service. He will not be compelled to wait. God sent Isaiah. What a mission He permitted him to perform! What words He permitted him to speak—His prophetic gospel—as soon as he had his twofold consecration. So He will send any man. None of us need be idle. Did not the Saviour teach us, as one of the petitions which should ever rise from His Church, *Pray ye the Lord of the harvest that He will send forth labourers into His harvest?*

In our preparations have we laid unequal stress upon our act in consecration? We want to be *consecrated*. Our office is to bear and to lift the cross. *As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up.* God intrusts to us the cross of Christ when He consecrates us. That is the sign. We must lift it high, or men will not see it, and be lost. Our gospel is in *danger* of being hid.

Suffer me, reader, to ask, Has the cross been put afresh in your hands? Are you trying to lift it a little higher, realising how many things there are which may hide your cross from some eyes, which, if they do not see it, as you raise it, will never see the cross of Christ, the truths of redemption? We hear the expressions often used in inculcating Christian humility, "Get self out of the way," "Hide behind the cross." "Let men see nothing of you, only the Saviour." This is the language of devout sentiment, but it is not Scriptural. The Scriptural place of a devout Christian is not behind the cross, but *under* it. There is no harm in being seen if we are seen with the cross above us lifted up, as Moses lifted up the serpent for the salvation of the sinners. We *ought* to be seen. A part of the argument of the cross would be lost if the cross-bearer were hidden.

We may be sent as Isaiah was sent; as the twelve were sent; as the seventy were sent; as the one hundred and twenty were sent; as Paul was sent; as all about us, men and women, are rising up and going forth, sent to the harvest field. But, if we would be, we must realise the two elements in consecration—our act and God's act—whereby the cross is renewedly put into our hands.

G. R. LEAVITT.

ROSE EASTON.

By M. A. PAULL, Author of "Whatsoever," "Tim's Troubles," "Friar Hildebrand's Cross," &c., &c.

CHAPTER II.—PAUL EASTON'S CHOICE.

"Self-denial that never mars its sacrifice by complaint."—*Dr. Parker.*

AUL EASTON had listened as intently, and with far fuller enjoyment, to the chairman's address than it had been possible for either Peter Gromer or Alice to do. Self-consciousness, pre-occupation about your own style, or about dress, or secret dissatisfaction with your own conduct, all tend to prevent your finding yourselves completely in accord with the thoughts and words of another.

The address, in its nervous power and suggestiveness, delighted Paul; and yet for a time, as for perhaps not a few others present, those tender words concerning the gentle partners of the ministers' life-work, were as full of significance as any. They revealed to him, what he had not half realised before, something of the power Rose had, either to make his labour, as a pastor, full and rich, and round, and complete; or to mar it altogether.

The consciousness of his own selfishness began to dawn upon him. How little he had remembered Rose in his plans. Tenderly as he loved her, proudly as he admired her, how easily he had accepted her life of sacrifice, of devotion, that "self-denial which never mars its sacrifice by complaint."

Oh! it was no wonder that there were tears in his eyes when Peter and Alice looked at him; no wonder that, spite of a very busy day, the time was found to write an unexpected letter to Rose, full of the Chairman's words, and his own warm, loving endorsement of them as regarded herself.

Rose Easton was washing and dressing their baby when his letter was brought to her. What a bright smile lit up her sweet face, what glad tears shone in her gentle eyes, what a thrill—delicious as the earliest joy of her happy love-time—made her pulses beat and her thin face flush with crimson! It was a pity that Paul Easton could not see her as she read his letter. How the weight was lifted that day from the most toilsome task! There never was drudgery in Rose's thought in regard to any duty she undertook for those dear to her, but the meanest office had something of poetry in it now that it was illumined by appreciation and love. In the heart of the happy wife and mother "the time of the singing of birds had come," and her low, tender voice went warbling at her work in harmony, through all those golden hours.

Paul Easton returned to his home on the Saturday, full of zeal in his Master's service, full of determination to be anything or nothing in his Father's hands, so that God might have all the

glory; and full also of that new aspect of home-life which would brighten all his future.

Never, as it seemed to him, had that home appeared so attractive. Rose and their two elder children were at the station to meet him. He arranged to come by an earlier train than he had at first intended, in order to give the little ones this pleasure, and his own satisfaction was not less than theirs. What a charming little group they made; and how sweet his Rose was looking, with the two pretty buds on either hand! Was it his fancy that she looked thin and delicate? Did she indeed need that "breath of mountain air" of which the Chairman had spoken? He had had his holiday in Wales that year, and she had stayed contentedly at home with their children, and the one young, inexperienced servant which was all the help he could afford her; and while he was away, to save him annoyance, she had all the house cleaning done, chimneys swept, carpets up, and everything accomplished that could worry him, or interfere unduly with the preparation of his sermons. She had done his study herself, afraid lest any harm might come to his cherished books, and pictures, and papers, and this at no small expenditure of her strength. All this he had thought little of before, now he remembered everything. The cool delicious comfort of his welcome from Wales arose before him, when he was refreshed and invigorated himself by the rest and leisure he had enjoyed, and came to find his dear little home bright, and fresh, and pretty as Rose could make it. How he blessed God for the words uttered at this autumnal meeting of the Union which had awakened him in regard to his precious wife!

Thought travels with lightning-like speed. All this was in his memory in that one tender look at Rose. He jumped out of the train, and clasped her and the children in his arms, with glad words of fond endearment. Rose was very cheerful, and the little ones were full of eager talk. Outside the station they entered the tram-car which passed their house, and drove home, with merry talk and happy glances, and, on the part of the children, delightful anticipations as to the contents of papa's bag from London.

Tea was ready—a charming little tea. The best slices fromt he small piece of meat that had been brought in for dinner had been put by, as a matter of course on Rose's part, for "dear papa's tea." A dish of fruit, a plate of home-made buns, crisply baked, some small cakes of bread, and a bunch of flowers, tastefully arranged, combined to give a somewhat festal appearance to the children's eyes, and little Adeline was permitted to join them at the table, as well as the three elder children, to her very great satisfaction and delight. Spite of the presence of so many little folks the meal was very orderly, and Mr. Easton praised his wife mentally for her excellent care of their little ones, whose conduct he contrasted with the clamour and confusion of the family amongst which he had been living since he left home.

After tea papa's bag was brought by Hal, the eldest child, at

some special expenditure of his strength; and with delighted interest the members of the little circle gathered around.

"What's for Adeline, papa?" lisped the little maiden of two years, as she climbed upon a chair to have a better view of the proceedings.

"Oh, Addy, you shouldn't ask!" said Hal. "Don't you know it's naughty to ask?"

But Isabel came to little Addie's rescue; "Hal, don't call her naughty," she said. "You want to know as much as she does, only you know better than to ask."

Paul Easton laughed as he drew out the key and opened the bag. He kept his hand inside it such a provokingly long while that the young ones became impatient, and Rose looked at him questioningly.

"Who has most patience?" he demanded in a playful tone.

"Mamma, mamma!" cried the little voices in harmony.

"And who shall be kept waiting for their present longest?" he asked again.

"Mamma!" cried little Walter, and Adeline echoed the word in her baby voice.

But Hal and Isabel were indignant. "No, dears," cried Isabel; "mamma ought to come first, and then we children; that's the way, papa."

"Yes; I should think so," said Hal. "Mamma's the first person that ought to be thought about."

"Good, Hal," said the father; "mamma's present must make its appearance first."

"I did not want anything, dear," said Rose, in her sweet, gentle voice. Let the very little ones have theirs; it is so difficult for babies to be patient."

But now Walter resented the idea of being a baby, and called for mamma to have her gift. Rose's face had flushed. Her husband generally brought some little offering for each of them on the occasion of his return from his rare absences; but the increased tenderness of his manner was the gift that he had already offered to her, and it was far sweeter than aught else could be.

But now a very small parcel indeed was handed to her from out the bag, and Adeline began to commiserate her mother.

"Poor mamma! such a little one!"

The children laughed, and Rose unwrapped the minute parcel. A small box appeared inside. Jewellery? It was years since she had had anything new of this kind. Views of the places in which her husband had spent his summer or autumn holidays had been the most frequent form his later gifts to her had taken, and he was conscious now that in bringing her these he had also satisfied his own desire to retain some remembrance of the scenes he had visited. The photographs had frequently been almost a greater pleasure to himself than to her, grateful and appreciative as she always was on receiving them.

But this love-gift he had brought her now was like the gifts of old days, and as she drew the exquisite frosted silver flower from its

pink bed of cotton wool, her own face was bright with pleasure and a warm blush suffused her cheeks. "Oh, Paul! this *is* lovely!" she said; "the prettiest brooch I have ever seen. How kind of you! But you really should not have had it. You might have bought that book——"

He interrupted her with a kiss. "I could have had nothing which would have so pleased and helped me, my Rose," he said; and she, wondering at his words, pondered over them as he distributed the other gifts. These were very simple, but so well chosen, that they gave infinite satisfaction. For the little Eastons had not many new toys. They did not suffer, as so many children of our day suffer, from a plethora of books and playthings. Money was not plentiful enough in the home for that; and each book, each toy, had to serve for the amusement of all the occupants of the nursery. And when they had a few pence to spare, the little articles they obtained for each other were prized as much as the costliest gifts could have been.

The happy evening wore away. Paul Easton gave himself up to his children till their bedtime, for what they termed "Pa's good old romps." He was "horse," and "bear," and "kindly giant" by turns; and when Rose carried off baby, and even Isabel and Hal had said good-night, he sat down, a little wearied with the play, to await his wife's return. He naturally seated himself in the easy chair. It was his chair. Rose had managed to purchase it for him as a birthday present, out of her housekeeping money, soon after they were married; and he had used it constantly since. Sometimes, but rarely—and he thought of this now—he had found her seated in it, on his return from visits to his flock, or when he left the study for the parlour, after the preparation of his sermons. And she had always risen from it immediately on his entrance, almost apologetically, and he had taken it as a matter of course, knowing she expected it, and perhaps half unconscious of anything else being proper or suitable for himself. It was very seldom she occupied it at all even thus, and his heart smote him as he remembered this. There was no other easy chair in the room. He had never thought of buying one for her. Now it occurred to him, would it not be possible? A little low chair of simple material and construction, but yet delightfully easy, how it would rest her! She could never get one out of her housekeeping money, he was quite sure of that. There were five children besides themselves and the servant to feed, and all but the servant to clothe; and he could allow her such a small amount monthly that if ever he did think of her difficulties and wants he was full of amazement as to how she could possibly do what she managed to accomplish. And yet he could not blame himself, his income was so small, and his dear people were not wealthy, and gold and silver were not the only nor the best riches. He would never leave a place where he believed he was doing a great and good work because his stipend was small. He really had no indulgence he could well forego. Had he not? Conscience refused to be silent. It told him that his beer and his

pipe might be done without; that there were vast numbers of his ministerial brethren who abstained from all intoxicating beverages, and a very great many who never spent a penny on tobacco. Rose never took any wine nor beer herself, and he wondered with a smile, what he should have thought if she had spent any of their limited income on cigarettes! She had none of these particular and selfish expenditures. It appeared to him, as he thought of these things, that he had been as a blind man till the Chairman had awakened him to his true position in regard to his Rose.

There was a light step upon the stair, and she entered the room, carrying a number of little articles that wanted the proverbial "stitch in time," in order to save the "nine." Paul Easton rose from his easy chair and playfully pushed her into it. He drew a little work-table to her side, and laughed as she began to expostulate, stopping her mouth playfully with kisses. But Rose managed to speak at last.

"Dear," she said, in the sweet voice that had made the music of his life so many years, "I can't be comfortable to sit here; you must really let me take another chair. The room won't look properly, unless you are in your own chair."

He threw himself on the hearthrug at her feet. "For once let me have my way, Rose, darling. I am going to indulge in this old-fashioned trick of mine once more, and you must listen to me, as you used to long ago, though you know me so much better now, and know, alas! how I have neglected some of my enthusiastic professions of tenderness and care for you."

"Neglected! nay, Paul, I will not let you say such things against your dear self. You have been ever to me the dearest, kindest, and best of husbands."

"Though I have always sat in the one easy chair we had, and left you, tired and weary, to sit on a less comfortable one."

Rose laughed merrily. "As if I would like to see you sit anywhere else than in the easy chair I destined for you. If all your self-asserted wrongdoing towards me is as easily disposed of, we shan't have much trouble."

"And though I have spent enough in my moderate glass of beer, and occasional glass of wine, and my pipe of tobacco to have given you half-a-dozen easy chairs."

"Nonsense, dear Paul," said Rose, stopping her work and laying down her needle, to caress him; "I cannot allow my husband and my minister to blame himself for nothing. Your glass of beer acts as a tonic, your pipe as an excellent sedative, and in the use of both you are the most moderate of men. I cannot allow you to take such fancies into your head. Do you not know how precious you are to me, how your life, your health, are more to me than all other luxuries?"

There were tears in her loving eyes as she said these words, and looked at him, and for a few moments neither of them spoke again.

(*To be continued.*)

NEAR THE LORD'S TABLE.

No. II.—"WITH ME ONE HOUR."

JUDAS gone; the hymn sung; the little company broken up; only four kept close together in the garden to watch and pray. The path of sorrow was becoming more and more gloomy, more and more narrow, as it winded along to the world's greatest death. There was to be no more sleep for Christ, except the cold sleep of the grave. He must watch and pray, and suffer, and die; but He must not rest. The eternal strain was already rending his soul, and the strain would not be slackened until He should have "bowed his head." A thousand faces might crowd round Him, but the face always nearest to Him would be the pale-worn face of death. The angel of consolation came and went away again, the angel of sorrow came and rested its head on His heart until it broke. "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death."

"What! could ye not watch with Me one hour?" This is the language of sad surprise—sad surprise bedewed with tenderness. God can never ask a hard question without taking His child upon His knee to help him to answer it, and His questions are difficult and troublesome only when we refuse to look in His face. Christ asked the question wonderingly, regretfully: "neither wist they what to answer Him,"—because they looked down instead of up. The compassion of His eyes was the best explanation of it all: "He found them sleeping for sorrow." Nothing can understand and explain human weakness like divine pity. In the lambent sky of summer a bird floats with shining wings, and sings: the world admires. Suddenly the song is hushed, the shining wings shudder, the bird falls: the world is disgusted. It is only love that sees the wound beneath the drooping wing, and runs to help. It required the gentleness of the mind of God to know that they were "sleeping for sorrow."

To sleep for sorrow is human; to watch for sorrow is divine. It was the hour of the divine in the garden, the hour of sacrifice and self-forgetfulness; but Peter, James, and John lost it. Their grief should not have been for their own sakes then, but all else forgotten in helping the helplessness of the Beloved. If only one of them had stood by as He trembled to take the bitter cup; if only one of them had knelt with Him on the ground; if only one affectionate hand had lovingly touched His own quivering hand; if only one tear of honest sympathy had mingled with His own tears upon the grass—only one— surely that night would not have been quite so dark and fearful! But

> "None was nigh,
> Save God and one good angel."

And we have still our Gethesemane hours, when we should learn to forget the private grief for the sake of enduring with

Christ the agony of the sinfulness of mankind; when we should share with Him the remorse, and the conflict, and the sad longing of the universal heart.

"Could ye not watch?" — *ye?* These were they who had lived nearest to Him for more than three years. Whoever else had to go away with the parable unexpounded, these three never had to go. Whoever else was shut out from the chamber of death where the daughter of Jairus lay, these men were allowed to enter and to see the holy miracle of life. Whoever else was left at the foot of the mount of transfiguration, these three ascended to the summit and stood awhile on the very threshold of heaven. "Simon . . . couldest not thou . . . ?" The faithful hand that saved thee when thou wert sinking in the angry waves will soon be nailed to the cursed tree—"couldest not thou watch?" And thou "disciple whom Jesus loved," it was a dear delight a little while ago to lean on His bosom: didst thou not feel the throbbings of pain when "He was troubled in spirit"? And soon thou wilt be standing by His cross while His bosom will be bleeding and torn, and those startling words of thine—"*he that saw it bare record*"—will thrill through the hearts of men for ever and ever like the sobs of helpless love—but "couldest not thou watch?"

"With Me." Every act and every experience of life gains a new meaning when it is associated with Christ. There is an originality of courage and purity in Him that gives its own character to whatever comes near Him. We never read our Bible until we read it with Him. A man takes up the Book of Life, and turns over its sacred pages with hurried fingers; he thinks he can make out some of those hard readings, he thinks he can follow the history of evil, and unravel the science of truth, and understand the heavenly poetry of love—he thinks so. Then in some solemn unexpected hour Jesus comes to read the book over with him. The fondled opinions, the contented fancies fade away into frail mist, and lose themselves in the sunbeams of divine intelligence. The Book of Life is a new book after reading it with Christ.

No one ever knows how solemn it is to watch, unless he has watched with Christ. To examine one's self with Him is to begin the sincere and correct life. Then every fault appears in its right proportion, and every evil walks about unmasked, and every grace stands forth as if it were a new thought of God. Oh, my poor ignorant soul! when thou searchest the house of conscience, do not be content with thine own flickering lamp, but ask Him to go in with thee. The light of His countenance will divide between the right and wrong, and reveal the half-forgotten duty, and sanctify the knowledge of the good.

"One hour." How many hours had He given over to them? How many words of "strong consolation" had He spoken to them during the past three years? Hours of parable, and miracle, and prayer; hours on the hill-sides around Nazareth; hours on the Galilean Lake; hours in the lonely regions of its eastern shore, and in the coasts of Tyre and Sidon; hours in Bethany, and on the

Mount of Olives; and all of them hours of heaven and of God, hours of "the next world's gladness prepossessed in this," hours of eternity shining on the care-worn face of time.

> "Transplanted Paradise, God's walking hour,
> The cool o' the day;
> The creature's jubilee; God's parley with the dust,
> Heaven here; man on those hills of myrrh, of flowers."

Such were the hours He had given them, and now—"one hour" for Him—denied! God never claims the full price of His gifts; we could not pay Him. "One hour" for the teaching, and the solace, and the heavenliness of those peerless years—it was not too much; but man is slow to love his best Friend.

The three failed, and surely that "one hour" lost—that deed of kindness refused—would be a mournful remembrance to them all their life. Could Peter ever look back to it but the hot tears would well up in his heart? If he had watched would he have denied? Did not John in the desolate loneliness of Patmos often bend his head regretfully beneath the shadow of that lost hour? and while the everlasting song of "the Lamb that was slain" came over the crystal sea, would not there be in his heart a sad undertone—*I failed to watch one hour with Him?*

Likely so; but though they failed and left Christ in his lonesome agony to watch Himself, He was never wanting to them in the trials of their after-life. Not long hence, Peter was in prison "sleeping between two soldiers," and his execution was to be on the morrow. Peter sleeping, the Saviour as ever holding watch: "and, behold the angel of the Lord came upon him . . . and his chains fell off from his hands." God never finds it hard to help his child, He only finds it hard to leave him. And John, although he "tarried" long—tarried until Jesus came—and although he was banished in his old age to the Isle of Patmos, yet never lost the companionship of the friendless Christ of Gethsemane. It is the meek, long-suffering love of God that heals the weakness of man.

The "one hour" comes yet, and comes to all. Every life needs these unworldly hours of Christ-like watching. The "one hour" of heavenly fellowship in sorrow is a hallowed memory that lingers for ever like the prayers of childhood. But how few there be that watch with Christ, how many there be that fail! How many turn away helplessly from the sorrow of humanity, and will not watch and pray, so that they may touch the strong hand of God! How many forget the pleasure and consolation of "God's walking hour," and in the hour of the Hidden Face sleep for sorrow! Gethsemane is still too hard for man. But in the midst of all these broken watches and the bitter denials that follow after, there is One who is never tired of building up the divine manhood even with very sorry fragments; One who is never weary of helping those who fail in the hour of sorest need! God is the last to give a man up. Thou hast failed, poor unhappy soul! Thou hast failed to help the beloved Son of God in His hour of anguish? Thou art in

despair? Go and seek for Him, and lay thy head on His bosom. He knows all.

"I came to Jesus as I was,
Weary and worn and sad;
I found n Him a resting-place,
And He has made me glad."

Hull. H. ELVET LEWIS.

"GET AS MUCKLE AS YE GIE."

THERE is a tradition to the effect that at the time of seat-letting many years ago, in one of our churches, a female member came to the officiating deacon in the vestry, and, instead of tendering the usual payment, announced her intention of withdrawing from the church as a sitter. "What for that?" said the office-bearer, turning quickly round from the table on which were spread his books and money, lifting his spectacles from his nose to the crown of his head, and looking at the malcontent with an expression of pained surprise. "Oh," rejoined she, "this is a cauld kirk; every time I enter it there's a shiver comes over me." "We maun see to that," said the kind-hearted and concerned deacon. "I wonder," added he, in his matter-of-fact simplicity, "whaur the cauld can be comin' frae; ye dinna sit near the door, and ye're no beside ony window." "Ah, ye've mista'en me," said the spinster; "I am no speakin' o' want o' heat for the outer man, tho' there's no ower muckle o' that either, but heat for the inner man: it's love, love, that's wantin'." "My dear woman, ye may be get as muckle as ye gie," replied the deacon. And after much cross-questioning it came out that since joining the church she had stood aloof from the other members, had failed to frequent their meetings, and not being of a particularly engaging manner, most of the members were shy in pressing their attentions upon her.

There are too many members like this worthy, but rather too cross-grained, woman. In coming into a church they expect a great deal, but they give a very little; they look for attention and love and are disappointed. If they were to show to others what they expect, they would have a different story to tell. They are just like iron or stone pillars in the church, that may be very solid and stable, but rigidly stand waiting for attention, and never go forward to give it. They absorb heat, but do not give it out. There are many passages in the Bible that teach us to love others; it would be difficult to find one that leads us to expect much from our fellow-men. But, as a general rule, if we do our duty to others, they will not fail to do the same to us; and if it should be our misfortune to be connected with a church that is really cold, let us do our best to melt and soften what is frozen and hard.

WORK AMONG THE MASSES.

II.—SICK AND IN PRISON.

OOR Tom Smith! I knew him well. He is dead now. But when I first saw him he was a bright young fellow under thirty years of age.

This is how I came to know him. A member of my church came to see me in my vestry one evening. She told me she was very much interested in a young man who lodged at her house, and who was given to drinking. Would I see him? She was sure I could gain an influence over him. He had been to hear me preach, and was much moved, and had been heard to say how he liked the services. All this, and much more, the good woman stated to me about the man.

Of course I would see him. I am always glad to help in such cases when possible. So it was arranged that he should come alone to see me in my private room. He came on the following Saturday evening, and I found him to be a young fellow of prepossessing appearance, with black hair and a rather nice face. His eyes were as dark and as kind as those of a pious Jew. The moment I saw him I thought this man ought not to be a drinker, and I was seized with a desire for his salvation. I made him feel as much at home as possible, drew him into a free conversation, and allowed him to unburden his crushed heart to me as to a brother. It was a sad and sorrowful story. I will let him tell it.

"I never was particularly wild, only light and gay. I always wanted to get on. I got married to a girl whom I loved very much. I did all I could for her. I had made a nice little home, and we were happy. All went well for a time, but at length trouble began. It seems my wife was not true to me.

"One day, when I came home from work, I found she had gone, and had emptied my house of its furniture. When I discovered her she was living with another man in a cottage which they had filled with my traps. As you may imagine, sir, I was a good deal put out. I went for my wife and furniture, but between the two of them I got the worst of it. I did not care so much for the things as I did for my wife. I tried to get her to come with me, but failed entirely. Well, sir, I took to drink, and things have gone worse with me ever since."

At this point he completely broke down and cried just like a little child. My heart was more touched than I can tell. I felt sorry for him. Wept with him. Talked with him. Prayed with him. I told him of a Saviour whose love and sympathy were for Him. I urged him to bring all his trouble to that Friend who never leaves, and assured him that if he could only leave all with God, and live a noble life in the future, the darkness would break, the mists and fogs be scattered, and in God's good time all would be well.

He signed the pledge of total abstinence, and promised to begin a life of faith and prayer. I believe he was sincere and deeply ear-

"SICK AND IN PRISON, AND YE CAME UNTO ME."

nest in all he promised to do and to be. He bade good night and left.

When he had gone I could not help wondering how many more kind-hearted young fellows like Tom have been driven into sin by such trouble. I have known not a few. May not his case suggest to us that perhaps many of the poorer wanderers who are away from God, living what we call wicked lives, 'are more sinned against than sinning.' I have not a shadow of a doubt that such was the case with this young fellow.

He kept his promises well for a long time. He remained sober, and came regularly to worship at Highbury. I often saw him, shook hands with him, and whispered an encouraging word. His landlady told me of the improvement in him at home, and was very hopeful about him. I occasionally had him in my vestry for a brief chat, and we often prayed together on those visits. But there was always one thing which pressed him sore—the loss of his wife. He wanted his wife. If ever a man loved a woman it was Tom.

Now, however, comes the sorrowful part of the story. The men amongst whom he worked knew that he was parted from his wife, and, as workmen will, chaffed him a good deal. He had lived much of this down, and was getting to take but little notice of it. But one day it broke out afresh. Some workman had seen them together, told how loving they looked in the street, and then called poor Tom a fool for standing all this so quietly. They joked him a good deal that day. He was able to resist the desire for drink, and had done so; he was able to conquer his own grief, and had done so; but this day he could not stand their taunts.

He rushed from the shop at the first opportunity and went straight to the public house, broke his pledge, and got under the influence of drink. Then he purchased a pistol and went and waylaid his wife and shot at her in the streets of Birmingham. He was seized, flung into prison, brought before the magistrate, and remanded for the assizes before I knew a word about it.

With a sorrowful heart the dear woman with whom he lodged came to give me the sad news. She had learned to love him as a son. I was greatly grieved, and knew not what to do. I saw that all the good was undone, and that poor Tom was doomed to be a convict. I went to see him before his trial came on. I was allowed a twenty minutes' interview,

Poor Tom burst into tears when he saw me. I think he was far more touched at my visit to him in prison than with anything else I had ever said or done for him. He told me that when he was maddened with the drink, he charged the pistol with small shot and fired at his wife in the street. But whilst he made no attempt to conceal this, he most strongly denied any intention of hurting her; he wished, he said to frighten her. And as a matter of fact, she was only hurt in the smallest degree. Some slight scratch or skin wound was about all the injury she sustained.

When my time was up I bade him goodbye. He was taken back to the prison cell, and I went to the governor of the gaol. I ar-

ranged with him for the prisoner to have the service of a counsellor at his trial, paid him the necessary fee, which had been provided by Tom's brothers, and passed out of the prison with a sorrowful heart.

I must shorten the story. The trial came on. It was a serious offence to shoot at a woman, no matter however bad she might be. This was the view which the jury took. He was found guilty and sentenced to *fifteen years penal servitude.* He entered upon the dreary and desolate life of a convict. To him that convict prison was a grave. He sickened, and died in *less than six months* of a crushed spirit and a broken heart. And thus ended the career of one who might have been so much better but for the sin which drove him into crime. Thus drink and sin rob husbands of wives, wives of their husbands, and fathers of their children. Yes, a good deal of work among the poor seems to be labour lost, effort thrown away, toil and care all in vain. But is it so? Who can tell? Only God knows. And, leaving all to Him, I keep toiling on.

Birmingham. CHARLES LEACH.

OLD WELSH PREACHERS.

THOMAS GRIFFITHS, OF HAWEN.

THIS eminent servant of the Lord, who in his day was one of the most popular and useful ministers in Wales, was born at Newport, Pembrokeshire, August 25th, 1784. He was the youngest of seven children. His father was a drunken sailor, and did nothing towards the support of his children; his earnings were not sufficient to satisfy his own lusts. The support of the family depended on the thrift and industry of the mother, who was a very godly woman. Thomas, before he was three years of age, lost his good mother; but his eldest sister, who also, like her mother, was one of the excellent of the earth, brought up her young brother in the nurture and the admonition of the Lord. When about ten years old he was taken to the service of one Captain Jones, who resided at Haverfordwest, as an errand-boy. During his stay there he acquired some knowledge of the English language. On his return home from Captain Jones's service, he went to Trewen, Cardiganshire, to his mother's brother, the Rev. B. Evans. Mr. Evans supported him for a year at a school at Newcastle Emlyn, and then apprenticed him to a tailor in Pembrokeshire. He was soon after admitted to the communion of the Congregational church in his native town. In the nineteenth year of his age he commenced preaching, and in a short time became very popular. In March, 1808, he was ordained at Horeb, in Cardiganshire, where he efficiently discharged his ministerial duties for six years. Having had but very scanty educational advantages in his youth, when the Academy was opened at Neuaddlwyd, in

1810, he went there as a student, and returned every Saturday to preach to his people at Horeb on the Sabbath. He thus continued for two years to attend the classes at the school, and to officiate as the minister of a large church. By his untiring application, he became a respectable scholar, and one of the best preachers in the whole country. In the year 1814 he resigned his charge at Horeb, and received an invitation to become the assistant of his uncle, Mr. Evans, of Drewen, who had five large churches under his pastoral care. In the year 1818, Mr. Griffiths, when his uncle became utterly disabled through old age, gave up three of the five churches, and confined his service to two of them—Hawen and Glynarthen. These two churches, under his earnest ministry, in the course of a few years became so large that he and his people considered it advisable to form two branch churches in distant parts of the district, so that at the time of his death he had four churches, containing an aggregate of about twelve hundred members, under his pastoral oversight. An overwhelming majority of the inhabitants of the district were attendants at his chapels, and most of the adults who attended were members of the churches.

As many of Mr. Griffiths' relatives had died suddenly of apoplexy, he had a presentiment for years that he also would pass off in the same manner. He had repeatedly expressed a wish to die on the evening of the Lord's-day, and his wish was granted to him. On Sunday morning, June 24th, 1838, he preached at Hawen, and administered the Lord's Supper; in the evening he preached at Glynarthen, and, after the sermon, he baptized two infants and presided at a church meeting. Then he went to his house, and, feeling somewhat tired after the work of the day, he retired to rest between nine and ten o'clock. Soon after he laid down he told his wife that he felt some strange sensation in his head, and requested her to lift it from the pillow, and in a few seconds he expired without a groan. Thus this faithful labourer in the Lord's vineyard ended his Sabbath on earth and commenced his eternal Sabbath in heaven.

Thomas Griffiths, in his personal appearance, was comely and dignified, of short stature, firmly built, quick and active in all his movements. He was always neat and tidy, but not foppish. There was in his countenance a happy combination of cheerfulness and solemnity. Nature and grace combined to qualify him to be the leader of men. All his people cheerfully submitted to his leadership, and considered it an honour to follow such a wise and safe guide.

He was remarkably generous and tender-hearted. Having lived unmarried till he was about fifty, he might have saved a considerable sum of money; but, throughout his life, he gave away every shilling he could spare to his poor relatives, to the poor of his churches, and to religious societies. Take the following act as an instance of his kindness and generosity:—A small farmer, a member of one of his churches, although a man who thoroughly understood the duties of his occupation, and was always industrious in his discharge

of them, somehow came to pecuniary difficulties. One day he called upon Mr. Griffiths for the loan of £15, to help him to pay his rent. He readily lent him the money. Some months after, the man absented himself from the chapel for several Sundays. Mr. Griffiths called at his house one day to ascertain the reason of his absence from public worship. Only the wife was in, and she tremblingly said, "You are coming here for the £15, Mr. Griffiths." "Oh, no," he replied; "I came to ask why your husband has not been in chapel for some weeks." The poor woman burst into tears, and told him that her husband's best clothes had become so shabby that he could not appear in a congregation. He wept with her, and said, "Tell your husband to borrow a suit of clothes, and come to-morrow to Newcastle fair to meet me; I want to see him there particularly." The man did as he was ordered, and met Mr. Griffiths at the fair. "I wanted to see you here," said he. "You understand everything about horses; I don't; buy me a suitable horse." The horse was bought, and then Mr. Griffiths took the poor man to a draper's shop, bought good stuff to make a suit of clothes for him, and ordered him to go at once to a tailor to have them made before Sunday. He also told him not to allow his mind to be troubled about the £15; that he would wait his convenience for the payment, and, should he never become able to pay, that he would forgive the debt. The man went home in a revived spirit. From that day his circumstances began to improve. He was able in less than a year to pay all his debts, and long before his death he was in very easy circumstances.

Mr. Griffiths was a very devout and heavenly-minded man. He usually spent hours every day in private prayer. Spiritual things were constantly the subjects of his meditations and conversations. In his pastoral visits, though always sociable and cheerful, he never joined in jests and frivolous talk. Wherever he went, he invariably left a hallowed influence behind him. He took particular notice of everything remarkable which occurred in the families of his congregations. The following striking and instructive anecdotes, with many others of the same character, were found among his manuscripts. Soon after he settled at Drewen, as his uncle's assistant, he was called to see a dying man, who was an occasional hearer but not a church member. He, in opening a conversation with him concerning his spiritual state, asked him why he had spent all his life without religion. "I find," said he, "that your father was a very good man, and a prominent deacon in our church years ago. How is it that you did not follow the example of your pious father?" The man feelingly said, "I will tell you, Mr. Griffiths. About sixty years ago, when I was a young lad, there was a dispute here about the choice of a minister. The church was divided into two hostile parties. My father remained neutral, and the leaders of both parties came to our house to give vent to their spleen against each other. I heard them, in conversation with my father, abusing one another in the most disgraceful terms. The Evil One took advantage of that to fill my mind with prejudices against

professors of religion and religion itself, and so I am likely to die in this sad state." This most solemn fact should be seriously considered by every professor of religion. Thousands of similar cases have probably occurred from time to time. Now we turn from that sad case to one of a different character. A poor working man, with his wife and three young children, dwelt in a small cottage near Aberporth. The man worked on the estate of a gentleman five miles from his dwelling, so he could not be at home with his little family on any day but Sunday. Being a thoroughly religious man, he prayed with his wife and children, morning and evening, every Sunday. One Monday morning the eldest child, a boy six years old, asked his mother, "Mother, is it not right to pray on any day but Sunday?" The mother replied, "We ought to pray every day, my dear child." "Is it not right for women as well as men to pray?" "Oh, yes," said she; "all men and women should pray." "Why, then, mother," said the child, "don't you pray with us when father is from home?" The mother had no answer to give; but after breakfast she took the Bible, read a few verses, and prayed with her little ones; and from that day she did the same always in her husband's absence. A few years after, that boy became a sailor. On one of his voyages he was taken ill at Calcutta, and had to be removed from the vessel to the hospital. On the day of his death he told one of his shipmates, "If you, William, live to return home, tell my mother that I died happily in the arms of the Saviour whom she taught me to love and serve at home."

Mr. Griffiths was one of the ablest, and most effective, and useful preachers of his age. He almost always preached on practical subjects, but in a thoroughly evangelical strain. All his sermons were the outpourings of his tender heart as well as of his strong intellect. He seldom failed to melt his hearers into tears, whatever his subject might be—a denunciation of sin and an awful description of the misery of sinners, in the strongest possible terms, or a recommendation of Christian virtues and a delineation of the blessedness of the saints. In a word, he studied through his whole life to make himself approved unto God—a workman that needed not to be ashamed.

Swansea. THOMAS REES.

TURNING THE LEAF.

[A boy, being told that he must turn over a new leaf in conduct, replied, "I do turn it, but the wind keeps blowing it back."]

YES, idle readers sitting at their ease,
Scarce lay a finger on the new-turned leaf;
And so the winds do with it what they please;
But earnest souls read on, as time were brief.

Intent to reach the end, and lose no link,
They turn each leaf but once, then hold it fast;
What thou art turning is immortal—think!
And set a weight against thy passion's blast!

JAMES HERBERT'S DIARY;

Or, Experiences with Seekers after God.

By the Rev. ROBERT TUCK, B.A., Author of "Netley Independent Chapel," "Links Wanted," &c.

II.—WON OVER BY THE LOVE.

THE passage which we give this time was written one Sunday evening, after Herbert had preached a sermon on the words, "The love of Christ constraineth us." He had been for some time greatly interested in one of the young people of the congregation, who was just entering upon her womanhood. He had again and again sought opportunities for personal conversation, and direct persuasion to decision for Christ; but something seemed to hinder her, or something seemed to be needed to help her into the kingdom—some wave of feeling to lift her over the dividing bar, close by which she seemed to be helplessly waiting. Emily G—— was the child of Christian parents, intelligent, affectionate, devout, with much of the usual feeling and sentiment that is common to members of religious households: ready to share in church work, and in every way a Christian *by association*, but not a Christian by personal resolves or personal experiences. There are very many such as Emily G—— in all our congregations; and too often because they are "left alone," and find no precisely adapted help; the early training fails to pass into consecrated living; and the boat, still outside the bar, is caught by the winds of this world, and borne out to sea, never again to come near to the harbour of Christ.

Herbert had this young girl laid upon his heart, for her own sake, and also because she seemed to him a type of many with whom a faithful pastor should learn skilfully to deal. At first Herbert thought the hindrance was an ineffective sense of sin, which prevented her from realising the need for, and the fitness of, the Saviour; and he proposed to himself at first an arousing, alarming sermon. But the more he thought of this plan the less it commended itself to him. He was lying awake early one Sabbath morning, and thinking how he could put the truth so as to gain power over such young people as Emily G——, when one of those voices which the soul only can hear seemed to say, "Can a person love another without trusting them? If you could win love, would not love carry faith with it?" In a moment Herbert saw how to deal hopefully with this young soul; and, putting aside what he had prepared for the Sunday evening, he resolved to speak on the words, "The love of Christ constraineth us," and give his whole energy to an endeavour to win the personal love of the young souls for Jesus. It was a new way of preaching for him; he had a direct object to accomplish; every sentence bore directly on his aim; his own love for Christ flamed up so as to make

every word glow; and it seemed to the congregation, that night, as if the pastor was determined to make every one of them love his Christ.

Herbert's chapel was only a small one, so he could see every face, and watch the response to his words. In great chapels ministers can preach *at* their congregations, but only in a feeble sense can they preach *to* them. Emily G—— was caught in the Gospel net that night. Herbert saw her fixed, eager gaze, as if new emotions were stirring within her; and when he spoke of the love of Christ in dying for us, a tear in her eye answered to the pathos in his tones, and he knew that God had used him, and made the story of "the love" to be the great wave that helped Emily G—— over the bar. That night she awoke to feel that Christ wanted her love, her life-love, just hers. At infinite sacrifice He had won the right to ask it, and He should have it. Henceforth of Christ she would say, "Whom, not having seen, *I love*."

Souls read souls in surprising ways; and when Herbert met Emily the next time, he did not ask her to tell him whether the great change was wrought. He spoke of common interests in Christian work, and then, when he shook her hand at parting, he simply said, "We are one in the love of Jesus now, Emily." Her lips fashioned the "Yes" which emotion kept from utterance, but the pastor knew that all was well. She had "set her love upon Him," and "therefore He would deliver her," and save her to the uttermost.

But I am telling the story as Herbert gave it in our chat together, rather than copying the passage from the diary, as written that Sunday night. So I turn at once to it.

"This evening's work has brought back to my mind one of the pleasant memories of my early preaching efforts. I have seemed to see the first person who was led to Christ by my ministry. It must have been the association of my text; but all the scene comes so vividly before me that it will rest me to write it down. I was not much more than a youth when I began to take occasional services in our village chapels. I suspect I did not then know much more than the bare simplicities and essentials of Gospel truth; but my own religious experience made me, from the very first, set the Lord Jesus very prominently forth in all my sermons, and try to persuade all who heard me to have personal dealings with Christ, in the confidence that 'He can heal,' and 'He can save.' I hope that will never cease to be the one most characteristic feature of my ministry, and it is pleasant to me to think how strongly marked it was from the very first.

"At that time I had a friend, whose home I frequently visited, and my friend's sister was often the companion of our walks and talks. Of course this family was interested in my attempts to preach, and, hearing of my engagement at one of the villages, my friend and his sister arranged to attend the service without my knowing; and, in the hope that I should not see them, they sat as

much as possible out of sight, beside a screen. My text was that which I have taken to-night, 'The love of Christ constraineth us.' Anything more simple than that sermon it would be difficult to conceive. I remember it well. It was only a persuasion that Christ does really love us, and does really want us to respond to His love by the gift of ours; but it was a holy constraint on Sarah B——, and, as we went home together that night, I had the joy unspeakable of gathering my first-fruits, and hearing a soul tell its sacred resolve to live henceforth for Him who had thus 'loved her and given Himself for her.'

"I have too often forgotten, since then, what I at that time so impressively learned, that, for many of our young people, salvation comes in the way of constraint to set the love on Christ. God graciously reminded me of that lesson again this morning, and I feel sure that the old text has been used of God, in the old way, again to-night.

"But that case seemed so easy, so free from conflict, such a simple stepping over from the 'life unto self' into the 'life unto Christ,' that, when I came to think over it, I troubled myself sorely with the fear that it could not be a saving conversion, and that something more—more definite, more indicative of mental struggle—was necessary. The fears were quite unreasonable. Sarah B—— was changed; amiable before, there was now a new gentleness and considerateness for others; there was a cheerful readiness to serve; an awakened interest in Divine things; and a tone upon her touch of all Christian duty, which plainly told that in heart and life there was a new love and a new Lord. Her life was taken away by sudden and unexpected disease; but the sincerity of her devotion to Christ was fully proved in suffering hours; and the dear girl who was won over by the love went gladly home to that heaven which is 'The Love's' everlasting embrace.

"God helping me, I will never be afraid again of those cases of conversion which take shape simply as *yielding to the love*. Why should I? It involves everything. Is it not a *new* thing for a soul really to believe the love that God hath to it, and to be willing to put itself into the hands of that love for cleansing, renewing, and redeeming? All needful experience comes along with it, or follows closely after it. My love to Christ shames my past, and makes me sad that one hour of life should ever have been lived so as to have grieved my Christ. My love to Christ dethrones the 'self'; it is the glory of love that it makes an absorbing ideal of its object. My love to Christ gives my life an inspiring aim. I want to be worthy of my loved One. And my love to Christ sets me testing all my conduct by the perfect standard of His pure and beneficent life. This is the 'regeneration'—the 'new birth.' The first breath of the new life is *love*. And, for thousands of our members of Christian families, this is conversion—persuading them to believe in the love of Christ, and respond to love with love."

THE YOUNG FOLK'S CORNER.

WINNING A PRIZE.

"I say, fellows, *will* you stop your racket and listen to me?" shouted Bert Ambrose, who was mounted on a box in the Glenville high school yard.

There was a pause in the wrestling, running and shouting—it was the noon recess—and about forty pair of eyes looked at the speaker, and one voice said, "Go ahead; we're listening."

"Well," said Bert, "Fred Lewis and I think that a grand skating match on One Mile Pond wouldn't be a bad thing. The ice is splendid now. What do you say?"

"Three cheers for Bert Ambrose and Fred Lewis, the originators of so glorious a scheme!" shouted Phil Hamilton, and the cheers were given and repeated with right good will by every boy in the yard.

"Now," continued the speaker, "those who think it a good idea to take up a contribution and give whatever we collect as a prize to the winner in the race signify their approval by saying Ay."

A deafening "Ay" rang out.

"Contrary minded ones signify disapproval by saying Nay."

Not a boy opened his lips.

"It's a vote," said Bert. "Now pass round the hat?"

Two boys with whom our story has, for the most part, to do stood in one corner of the yard. One was Phil Hamilton, the son of a wealthy lawyer, who had recently come to the place. Phil was a tall, broad-shouldered, ruddy-faced boy of fifteen, an acknowledged leader and favourite among his companions in Glenville, although he had been among them for so short a time.

The other boy was Ray Jewett. His father was dead, and his mother took in sewing and fine ironing. He was of about the same height and age as Phil, but his figure was slender, and his facer paler than that of his friend. The other pupils good-naturedly called these two "Phil and his shadow," as, being most excellent friends, they spent all the time they possibly could together.

When each boy had deposited his mite, the money was counted and found to amount to twelve dollars.

"I'd be a lucky boy if I could win that prize," said Ray.

"What would you do with it?" asked Phil.

"I don't mind telling you," was the answer. "If I go to school next term, I must have some new books and a pair of boots. And at home there is coal to buy. Mother has not been very well this fall, and I know she won't be able to get it. I've been thinking that I'd have to stay out of school and work. But, if I could win this twelve dollars, I think, with what I could earn mornings and nights and Saturdays, we'd be all right. The books wouldn't cost over five dollars, and the boots would be three. That would leave nine for the coal, for I've earned and saved five dollars.

"Do you think you are likely to win the prize?" asked Phil.

"As likely as any of the fellows," said Ray, "and perhaps more likely, 'though that sounds like bragging, which I hate. The fact is, we haven't any real good skaters here. Jim Ellis is fair, and so is Fred Lewis. The rest are pretty slow. We've had three races and I've beaten twice, and I'm not much on skating myself. By the way," he added, suddenly, as if the thought had just come to him, "what kind of a skater are you, Phil?" Just then the teacher rang the bell, and Phil was heartily glad to hear it, for he was not prepared to answer Ray's question. He knew himself to be a most excellent skater. He had never been beaten in a race. He could skate backward nearly as rapidly as forward, cut circles, and do many other things on ice that were the marvel and admiration of those who had witnessed his feats. He had not the shadow of a doubt, as there were, according to Ray's statement, no real good skaters among the Glenville high school boys, that he could easily win the offered prize. He did not care for the money. His father was always liberal towards him, and his portmanteau was seldom empty. He disliked boasting as heartily as Ray, so he had never told the boys that he could skate well; but he had been longing for some good ice to show them that he excelled in a pastime he so

dearly loved. He could feel his cheeks glow and his blood move more quickly at the very thought. But there was Ray, who needed the money so much. Would it be doing as he would be done by to skate it away from him? Phil tried to satisfy his conscience by saying, "If I were poor, I don't think I'd want another fellow to hang back and let me win a prize that he could get in spite of me if he tried. I'd want to get the money fair and square, or not at all."

But this reasoning did not satisfy him. When Phil reached home that night he went directly to his room, and, sitting down, said sturdily to himself: "Now, Philip Hamilton, I want to have a plain talk with you, and find out just what you mean to do. You and Ray Jewett cannot both win this race. If you don't win, it is very probable that he will. Now, do you propose to skate that money away from him, and so cheat him out of a term's schooling and a chance of helping his mother? You have wavered long enough, sir. Now I demand an answer." And Phil raised his head proudly, and said in a decided tone, "No, *sir!* I don't mean to do any such shabby thing."

He was among the first to reach the pond that night. Ray came a little later, and Phil knew by the look on his pale face that something troubled him, and asked what it was.

"Cousin Johnny came and borrowed my skates yesterday," was the answer, "and he has split one of them. I'm afraid it'll come apart while I'm on the ice to-night."

Phil quickly took his new skates from his shoulder, saying, "Take these, old fellow; I feel in my bones that I won't do much at skating to-night, and your old ones will do as well as any for me."

Ray hesitated, but Phil insisted, and had his way.

The distance to be skated was just two miles. Every boy on the pond, with one exception, did his best; but Ray reached the goal a few yards ahead of any of his companions. Two very happy boys left the ice that night. One had gained a victory in a skating match, and, what was far better, the money that would materially assist him and his mother. The other gained a victory over himself, and the approval of his conscience.

L. A. CHURCHILL.

OUR LIBRARY TABLE.

WE are glad to see the re-publication of George Macdonald's *Works of Fancy and Imagination*, by Alexander Strahan, 25, Henrietta Street, Covent Garden, in a neat and tasteful form. The second volume, entitled *The Disciple*, contains some very beautiful pieces, one of which by permission of the publisher, appears on another page.

Cassell and Co. have sent us *Simon Peter: His Life, Times, and Friends*, by Edwin Hodder. The author sees in Peter "a man, simple, sincere, and honest, with a large loving heart, and a noble purpose," from whose weakness he takes courage. Avoiding in a great measure, controversial, doctrinal, and critical topics, the author has sought to set forth the life of a real man, and to bring to the light his character, motives, and feelings. This he has done in plain, everyday language, giving a good idea of the surroundings of the Apostle, both before and after he became "a fisher of men." It is strange that there are comparatively so few books published on the life of Simon Peter, and we are glad that the author has made this addition to their number, worthy alike of his pen and of his subject.

Laws of Christ for Common Life, by R. W. Dale, LL.D., is, in our opinion, the ablest and most serviceable contribution which the author has made to Christian literature. All the writings of Dr. Dale are marked by strength and clearness, but none of his other books, in their subjects, are so suited to his eminently practical mind as this. We would call special attention to the chapters on "Everyday Business a Divine Calling," "Political and Municipal Duty," and particularly to the one entitled, "Universal Sovereignty of Christ," which contains the pith of the whole book. The volume will occupy a pre-eminent place amongst books treating of the outward and everyday aspects of the Christian life. Published by Hodder & Stoughton.

THE TEACHERS' PAGE.

INTERNATIONAL LESSONS FOR MARCH.

THE subject covered by the lesson-subjects for this month is Paul's time of imprisonment at Cæsarea. We begin with his hurried night-journey to Felix, deal with his relations to two Roman governors, and leave him, still a prisoner, waiting for opportunity of journeying to Rome (Acts xxiii. 17 to xxvi. 32). The early part of this time is exciting, because of the schemes of the High Priest's party to secure the person of Paul; and the necessity for Paul's protecting himself by using his right of appeal as a Roman citizen. The latter part is specially interesting for its picture of a grand court scene in the old Roman days, and for the dramatic contrast between the splendour of Agrippa and Bernice and their train, and the moral grandeur of the poor prisoner, standing before them with the chain on his wrist, but a light in his eye, and a glow upon his lips, that gave him power to sway even the cold Roman governor. Often our admiration has been asked for the quiet, firm utterance of Luther at the Diet of Worms, but that seems to us to come a long way after the heroic pleadings of Paul before Agrippa, in which we find an enthusiasm for Christ that consumes the self-love, and fills the Apostle with intensest longing for the salvation of all whom his voice may reach.

For interesting children, and the persuasion of our youths and maidens to full decision for Christ, this month's lessons provide most efficient material and suggestion. We have found it very hard to give up the older associations of the words, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian"; but we feel they must come back again if we try to work out Paul's answer to Agrippa's jest. One way or another, with little persuasion or with much, this is Paul's intense desire, for Agrippa and for us, that we should be Christians *indeed;* fully, wholly, consecrated to Christ; "not almost, but altogether." So we earnestly ask all teachers, and all parents, to use this particular lesson for endeavouring to secure personal *decision* for Christ.

Treating this month's series of lessons from the point of view taken in the previous months, we get a key to the proper understanding of it. In January we dwelt on Paul's Christian character. In February we saw that character tested by sudden and difficult circumstances. This month we observe *Christian character finding expression when personal liberty is curtailed.* Paul was almost entirely separated from public work and public associations for at least two years. It must have been a dreary, depressing time to him, and a severe testing to his spirit. To be obliged to do nothing when you feel *ill* is not hard, but to be compelled to do nothing when you feel able to do much is a bitter experience. How did Paul's character bear this new kind of testing?

Teachers will not forget the illustrative help found in Luther's experience at Wartburg Castle, John Bunyan's at Bedford Jail, or in Richard Baxter's imprisonment at London. Nor should we fail to compare such experiences as those of Moses and Elijah at Horeb, and our Lord in the wilderness-temptation. A suggestion has been made, for which we wish more evidence could be found, that Paul spent much of this time in preparing, with Luke, the work which really is the "Gospel according to Paul," but which goes by the name of Luke, so that Paul's name attached to it might not create needless prejudice against it

The following points may be fully illustrated from the contents of this month's lessons:—(1) Paul's energy in using all honourable means for securing personal safety and personal liberty. Our life, liberty, health, are trusts from God, and in guarding and using them we are to be found faithful. (2) Goodness winning influence on those curtailing his liberty. Compare the story told of John Bunyan, who was allowed, by his jailer, to leave the prison when he liked. (3) Piety mastering fretfulness and depression. Paul learned "in patience to possess his soul." (4) Faithfulness in using all opportunities for serving Christ, strikingly illustrated in his bold reproofs of Felix and Drusilla.

Paul was put into silence, but he could not be silent. He found out how to make silence eloquent with witnessings for Christ.

ROBERT TUCK.

ROSE EASTON.

By M. A. Paull, Author of "Whatsoever," "Tim's Troubles," "Friar Hildebrand's Cross," &c., &c.

Chapter III.—CALLED HOME.

"If you please 'm, Mrs. Gromer's servant would like to speak to you," said the Eastons' young servant, Mary, some days later, as she opened the parlour door, after knocking, and looked with a very scared face at her mistress.

"Why, what's the matter, Mary?" asked Rose Easton, "why do you look so frightened?" Mary answered her mistress with another question, "Please 'm, shall she come in?"

"Certainly."

No time was lost, for Susan, Mrs. Gromer's servant, entered so immediately as to suggest that she had been close at Mary's heels.

"Oh! if you please, Mrs. Easton, nurse says would you come; she thinks poor little Tottles, Miss Fleda I should say, is dying."

"Dying!" exclaimed Rose Easton, in a startled tone; "of course I will come."

It was like Rose to hurry from the room without any questions, and to array herself in a minute or two for her expedition. She bade Susan, as she left her, to make haste back to the nurse and say she was coming, and only stayed to knock at her husband's study door, and briefly explain what had happened. Paul proposed to accompany her, but she begged him to remain, unless she sent for him, believing her own servant might be otherwise tempted to leave the house in order to spread the interesting news. Poor Mary's fault was gossiping.

When Rose reached Mr. Gromer's house, she found everything in confusion. The nurse was apparently so much frightened as to have lost her self-possession, and Rose found it extremely difficult to obtain a sensible explanation of what had happened. Poor little Tottles lay in a half unconscious state, and her face was very white, save for the dark rings under the eyes, and the strange dark hue that overspread the pallor of her small face. The doctor had been sent for, but had not yet come.

"Has she eaten anything poisonous?" asked Rose anxiously.

"I don't know what she's done," said the nurse; "she's been a very naughty little girl all day, and as stubborn as possible. She would not tell me what she had done, though I saw something was the matter. She's a very naughty child, ma'am, the most difficult child to manage I ever knew. Her mamma lets her have her way in everything, I'm told, and that's sure to make trouble for everybody else."

Rose could hardly find patience to listen to this. "I should advise a warm bath at once. We must treat her now, at any rate, as

a sick child, not as a naughty one. Tottles, dear," she said, bending over her, "do you hear me. Are you in pain?"

There were traces of tears on the wan cheeks, but the child did not stir now. The nurse acted like an offended dignitary, and would neither oppose nor forward Rose Easton's plans. But she did not hesitate. She undressed the poor little girl, and plunged her in a warm bath, directly the appliances were made ready by Susan, and presently the doctor came. He felt so convinced that she must have taken something of a poisonous nature, that he treated her with the proper remedies, and recommended that a telegram should be sent at once to her parents. Rose wrote it to Peter Gromer. "Tottles alarmingly ill; come at once."

The Rev. Peter Gromer and his pretty Alice were at a genteel villa in one of the fashionable suburbs of London to spend the day. Peter was to take the week evening service at their highly ornamental chapel, and he had prepared a very elaborate and carefully finished sermon for the occasion, as full of philosophy as of Christ; for he desired to show these intellectual Londoners his cleverness and his appreciation of all the great avenues of modern thought along which they loved to stray. The aim of his sermon was much more to show that Christianity was a grand system of philosophy, than that it was the satisfying of the human needs, the aching hearts, the toiling lives of men.

Both Peter and Alice were very sanguine as to the result of this invitation and this sermon. A broad hint had been given them by the gentleman of the house, who was a deacon of the chapel, that some of the congregation were not quite satisfied with their minister, that he was somewhat too old-fashioned in his notions, that he did not take the grand outlook of the great minds of this nineteenth century, that he wanted to put the man of extremest refinement and culture precisely on a level with the most ignorant old labourer who loved Christ. "And that you know, my dear sir," he added, "will hardly do in these days. We have learnt to understand that knowledge is power, that even Christians cannot afford to be illogical, that there are many things in the Bible which are very probably simply fables. Fables, no doubt, of important truths, but not to be regarded in any other light than as the symbols through which lessons were taught to the unenlightened minds of past ages. Even a complete belief in the miracles is scarcely to be deemed an essential now. We, who bask in the sunshine of accumulated centuries, may well find ourselves enabled to see farther and understand more than the writers of the past."

Peter Gromer ventured a slight remonstrance: "We need great care, I think, not to regard as simply fables anything which commends itself to our intellect as probably facts."

"Oh! certainly," assented his host; "but I am persuaded that if we are to retain in our congregations the thoughtful and philosophical young men of this present era, we must be prepared to let some things go, to which we have held too tenaciously in the past."

"I quite agree with you," said Alice; "what matters it, if we

hold to the great truths, how much we let go of those little things which are but as the fringe of the robe of truth, and not essentially important?" She looked so very pretty in her earnestness, and her little speech sounded so well, that Peter was prouder than ever of her, and Mr. Burnet appeared charmed. So they talked till the dinner hour, six o'clock, when the deacon's two sons arrived from town, and they went to the dining-room. Everything was served in an elegant, and, to Alice Gromer, most delightful manner. Ah! if she could only hope ever to have such an establishment as Mr. Burnet's, she could be quite content. The sparkling plate and glass, the well-cooked viands, the bright wines, the attentive servants, and the literary discourse, all were just what she enjoyed. What a pity that in their home at Saxerby, owing to their straitened means, meals were so often a mere scramble for something to eat, and fulfilled none of those pleasant conditions that were around her now. Tablecloths would get so dirty with careless servants, and they never washed things properly so as to make them shine. To be sure, Rose Easton did have things nice, in a very humble way; but only by making herself a complete slave to her husband and children and house. She really believed Rose never could find time to read the *Nineteenth* or the *Contemporary*, or the latest philosophical novel; and, if she did not, how could she be a true companion to her husband, how could she march along with him, advancing to those higher altitudes of thought, those magnificent mental platforms, whence one saw, as in a glorified vision, the concentrated wisdom of the ages? If Peter only had eight hundred or a thousand a-year, how they would study together, how they would advance together, what a philosophical Arcadia would be theirs!

She was in the midst of a charming talk of this highly intellectual kind, with one of the gentlemanly sons of their host, over the fruit and wine of a choice dessert, when there came a hurried knock at the outer door of the villa, and a telegram was delivered for Mr. Gromer.

When she saw the yellow-brown envelope in her husband's hands she did not feel alarmed, as most young mothers might have done. She thought it gave Peter an air of extra importance; doubtless he was wanted to preach somewhere else by these clever Londoners, who understood him so much better than the stupid people at Saxerby. But Peter Gromer rose abruptly after he read it, with an almost bewildered air.

"What is the matter, my dear sir?" said his host kindly.

"Alice, little Tottles, is ill, very ill; we must go home."

"Tottles ill! What is it? Who sends it?" asked Alice, coming to his side. She leant over his shoulder and read the telegram. "From Rose Easton." "Well, Peter, we must remember that Rose is an alarmist; I should feel much more unhappy if it came from anyone else. Why didn't she say what was the matter? That might make all the difference. Children are so soon up and so soon down," she added, turning to Mrs. Burnet for assent.

That lady, being deaf, did not quite understand, and nodded politely.

"Can we go to-night, Peter?" asked Alice.

Peter Gromer seemed as confused as his wife was clear. He dearly loved his wife and children, and his philosophy stood him in poor stead, as he thought of little Tottles, with her hot temper yet passionate love for them both. The telegram had already been somewhat delayed, it was sent first to their lodgings and then re-sent to Mr. Burnet's for them. Time-tables were brought, and the gentlemen consulted them industriously. All agreed presently that it would be quite impossible for them to catch the last train to Saxerby, which would start from Euston in half an hour; and they could not reach that terminus in less than an hour, even with the utmost speed. There was therefore nothing else to be done, than to telegraph back to Saxerby, with the request for further information, and to say that they would come by the earliest morning train, which reached their home about ten o'clock.

The Burnets kindly and considerately left their guests alone, for some little time.

"I can't preach to-night," said Peter Gromer, walking up and down anxiously and restlessly. He seemed to see before him one little face, flushed and feverish, the parched lips calling for "Papa! mamma!" and the eyes meeting nothing but the faces of comparative strangers; and the thought would press itself upon him: Had they been neglecting their first duty for their own enjoyment?

"But you know you must, Peter," said Alice, whom those words about not preaching had very seriously startled. "It would be dreadfully rude to Mr. Burnet, especially; and of course he can do nothing for you unless he hears you. It may make all the difference in the world to your whole future career, Peter, and to mine, and to our children. Mrs. Easton is such an alarmist about babies."

"She has great experience," said Peter dismally.

"Yes; and that of course makes her able to trace every symptom almost too readily, don't you see?" said Alice coaxingly. "Well, for my sake, you will try to preach to-night, dear?"

"If I do, it will not be that sermon I had told you of, Alice."

"Oh! why not?" Alice looked almost displeased.

"Because I feel to want some comfort. Don't you, Alice? The bare philosophical side, even of Christianity—if there is such a side of *real* Christianity—won't do when trouble comes."

"Why, Peter, what has changed you so? I thought you considered philosophical Christianity the very highest form of mental culture, blending the intellectual and the spiritual into a perfect union."

"Perhaps I do," he returned; "but now, Alice, darling, I feel like taking Tottles in my arms and hastening after the Master to beg Him heal my child; don't you?"

"I really don't understand you," she said. "It seems to me this trial is an occasion for showing how calming, how ennobling is the influence of such a Christianity as we profess; that duty can be fulfilled, that feelings can be held subservient to the mind, that we

can sacrifice everything to the promulgation of the lofty ideas that will sustain and purify the race. You know I cannot trouble about the dear little child as you do. She will be taken every care of. That nurse was most highly recommended to me, and Rose Easton, of course," she added, with the slightest tone of irony, "is perfection as a nurse."

Before they left the house for the chapel, a second telegram arrived: "Still very ill, not much change. Shall stay the night, and await your coming anxiously."

Peter Gromer poured out his thankfulness to Rose Easton. Alice took an immense comfort in the fact that Tottles was not declared worse. She entreated her husband to preach his original sermon. But he had already informed Mr. Burnet that though he would gladly go into the pulpit and do his best, yet he felt that he was not equal to that essentially intellectual study of the passage he had arranged, and that, as he did not write his sermons, he would rather take the audience a little into his confidence, and preach a simple discourse.

Mr. Burnet, though somewhat disappointed, acquiesced cheerfully, and promised to obtain for him such a hearing as they would both desire on a future occasion.

Peter Gromer never felt more emptied of self and more anxious to keep close to his Master than he did that evening, when he ascended the elaborate pulpit of the highly ornamented chapel of that fashionable London suburb. In a few well chosen, because thoroughly natural and heartfelt and simple words, he told the congregation of his child's illness, and begged their kindly sympathy and indulgence. And then he prayed.

"A little child shall lead them." These words were true of the minister and of his hearers, that evening. Eyes unused to weeping were moistened at the pathos of that prayer; and, in the sermon which followed, from the words, "Come and lay Thy hand upon her and she shall live," Peter Gromer drew near to the Master himself, and took the needy souls of the congregation with him.

(*To be continued.*)

TRUE RELIGION.—George MacDonald, in a recently published story, says "Religion is simply the way home to the Father. The true way is difficul enough because of our unchildlikeness—uphill, steep and difficult—but there is fresh life on every surmounted height, a purer air gained; ever more life for more climbing. But the path that is not the true one is not therefore easy. Uphill is hard walking, but through a bog is worse. Those who seek God with their faces not even turned towards Him, who, instead of beholding the Father in the Son, take the stupidest opinions concerning Him and His ways from other men—what should they do but go wandering on dark mountains, spending their strength in avoiding precipices and getting out of bogs, mourning and sighing over their sins, instead of leaving them behind and fleeing to the Father, whom to know is eternal life? Did they but set themselves to find out what Christ knew, and meant, and commanded, *and then to do it*, they would soon forget their false teachers. But, alas! they go on bowing before long-faced, big-worded authority —the more fatal when it is embodied in a good man, who, himself a victim to faith in men, sees the Son of God only through the theories of others, and not with the sight of his own spiritual eyes."

ADDRESSES TO YOUNG CONGREGATIONALISTS.

I.—DENOMINATIONAL SENTIMENT.

THE brief addresses which I purpose writing are intended to be upon certain aspects of our "faith and order" suggested by a study of Dr. Dale's new *Manual of Congregationalism*, and also by some practical knowledge of the peculiar wants of young people who are attaching themselves to our churches. I will presume that the young Congregationalists, whom it is my desire to address, have made themselves more or less acquainted with the contents of the *Manual*. If they have read it with any degree of care and appreciation, they will have partaken of the same inspiration as that which animates the writer, and they will be easily persuaded of the value and significance of the points to be brought before them.

The subject of this present paper—Denominational Sentiment—stands first in our series, both as a suitable preparation for the topics which will follow, and also because, owing to a variety of causes, not the least of which has been the want of such a Manual as Dr. Dale's, its consideration has become to Congregationalists a matter of more than ordinary urgency and importance. For some time past we have had to confess that such denominational sentiment as was to be found amongst us was of a very pale and sickly hue, an affair that had even to be offering a half-apology for its existence. But we are hoping to see it revive amongst you, young friends, in a robust and wholesome form; to see you loyal to your church and to its order, fired by its noble ideal of Christian brotherhood, glorying in its immediate appeal to Christ in all things, and proud of its history and achievements. Truly, one of the first results to be expected and earnestly desired from a study of the *Manual* which so many of you have now in your hands, is the revival of such a strong and loyal feeling towards Congregationalism as I have indicated.

You have often heard it said that *every* system for the administration of the affairs of men has its weak place, and the observation is as true as it is trite. And not less so is the further remark that that characteristic or principle which gives nobility to a system determines likewise the nature of its weakness. We, as Englishmen, are somewhat well posted in the strong virtues of liberal and democratic forms of Government; but we can admit that strongly centralised systems of government, as compared with free constitutions, are, in certain directions, more readily effective. To some this has seemed so admirable that they have yearned for "benevolent despotisms." We ourselves can have no interest in denying that freedom has its perils; that systems based upon freedom have, as well as places where they are nobly strong, places also where in practical administration they prove weak, and where they need to be watched with care. And ecclesiastical systems

which cherish the spirit of individual liberty must be included in the same criticism. They have, as their easy-going critics maintain, imperfections in their actual administration, like other forms of church polity; though we may hold that they are faults which incline towards virtue. Everything for which men with their sins and weaknesses are answerable, is open to some degree of aberration or failure. We strive after perfection, but in human conduct we never discover it. Even God's original plan for dealing with man left an opening for failure, and for the moment did fail; would have failed permanently were it not that with God there is a boundless reservation of mercy. We have tried to discover God's true Church upon earth, the true fellowship of Christ and his people; and in due submission to our great Father in Heaven, instructed by his Word, and guided by the Divine Spirit, we believe ourselves to have found it in that "faith and order" which is commonly called Congregational or Independent. But, let this system have all the ideal symmetry and all the Divine sanction which we believe it to have, it must be worked by men who have not yet attained to the perfection of Christian manhood. Congregationalism cannot prevent the manifestation of human weakness and error.

Young friends, try and clearly understand my position. I want to press upon your notice a certain lack of cohesion sometimes to be observed in our denominational and church life. I want you to take away this, which some of us have felt to be a reproach; to believe more enthusiastically, to cleave more loyally and lovingly to the church—your church—which to-day is confessing to this weakness; that, by so believing, and so cleaving, it may in future generations have this one weakness less. But you must guard yourselves against an admission which indolent and easy-going indifference, and want of strong conviction, would seek to draw from you: that, since all church systems have their failures to record, therefore it is of no vital consequence which you select or which may prevail. You must have faith to believe that that system which comes nearest to the mind of Christ, nearest to Apostolic practice, nearest to the ideal brotherhood which union with Christ encourages us to strive after, is the system, take it with its strength and weakness, most surely calculated to bring about the final triumph of our Lord; being persuaded that in those things which are most vital—loyalty to Christ and to the Truth—it will show itself strongest, while only in that which is of a second degree of importance—matters of outward organisation and church expediencies—will it betray a weakness which can be called characteristic.

We have no need as Congregationalists to be ashamed of our record in the past as regards our loyalty to Christ, even when such loyalty cost dear; or loyalty to the Truth, though others, under bonds of creed subscription, might have been expected to swerve less from the eternal criterion; or loyalty to our race, its liberties and highest well-being, whether at home or abroad. In all these things we are conscious of our good name. And yet, for all that,

we have shown less vitality of a certain sort than other church systems which stand contrasted to ours, and for that reason we have in certain circumstances succeeded in a far less degree than they. And a part of this shortcoming on our part is due to a lack of high enthusiastic devotion to our order. We have been wanting for more than a century in strength and aggressiveness of denominational sentiment.

I have observed over and over again, in members of what are called 'connexional systems' a greater tenacity in holding to their church. They cohere, through good and evil report, more closely than we do. "*Our* church" is to them a more potent influence, wields a more peremptory authority. It is possible, of course, that this feeling should become superstitious. Have we not met persons to whom the very word *church* was a vehicle of superstitious sentiment? It was part of the vocabulary of the incantation to which they bowed. Let the doctrine be what it might, let the system be what it might, let the practical policy of its leaders, the manifest lives of its adherents be blameworthy in any conceivable degree, yet would they hold to what they had been taught to consider "*the* Church." Superstition is often more tenacious than truth. You may convince a man intellectually, and yet he will cling to his old superstitions. He will associate luck and ill-luck with signs and occurrences; he will avoid passing under a ladder for other reasons than the possibility of a paint-pot falling upon his head; he will turn the silver in his pocket when he first sees a new moon; these and many other things, though admitting to you that they are to be condemned by common-sense, and by the very nature of Christianity. When a man shall have no other conception of a church save that which is purely superstitious, no wonder he clings to it with strange tenacity, an immovable and ignorant devotee. No religious attachment is so strong, except the highest—that of an enlightened and thoroughly consecrated man to the Church which he believes to be the brotherhood of Christ upon earth. Weeds will grow, rank and fat, where sweet herbs and flowers would die unless supported by devoted cultivation.

But in systems which by no means are obnoxious to the above condemnation, there is more *esprit de corps* manifest than is often found amongst members of Congregational churches. It is one of the advantages to which inferior systems of church government may lay claim, though in their case it is gained at the sacrifice of what is more precious. The Roman Catholic Church has it, perhaps, most strongly. But all systems which are strongly centralised develop it naturally; those most nearly approximating to the military system—that is, the feudal, or aristocratic system—having it in the greatest degree. They encourage the clannish feeling inordinately; they develop by their material realities the sense of being part of a huge organism.

Congregationalism has in it something of the cosmopolitan feeling which all democracies foster. It has been tolerant even to

indifference to wrong and self-effacement. It loves liberty so well that it knows not where on occasion liberty must be austere in asserting its own claims, or cease to be. For liberty has a trick of sacrificing its own birthright as though in very bravado of its freedom. In the fight it has been all-powerful; but in piping times of peace its chivalry has degenerated into that weak magnanimity which will hang itself rather than seem to infringe upon the rights of its opponents; dying for the sake of that which most needs it living. From some such spirit Congregationalism has too often been chivalrous in a perverse, left-handed way. Forms it has held to be matters of such pure expediency as to forget that the true polity of Christ's Church is more than mere form or expediency; that the methods of liberty have a deep correspondence with the truth itself, and are vital to its existence; that while men who err in matters of church government are not of necessity, and on that account, to be classed in the same category with those who err in the fundamental truths of Christianity, yet that the form and the doctrine are so mutually related that they act and react upon each other; that a false system of church government has a tendency to corrupt the truth in the direction of its own dominant characteristic; that there is an intrinsic preciousness in the ideal polity depicted in the New Testament worth fighting for and rejoicing in.

All this results in what I have pointed out—a weakened denominational feeling; and yet, when we come to gravely consider the matter, who, if sincere in our profession, should have so strong and exalted attachment to their denomination, as a denomination, as we? Amid the conflict of contending systems, who should stand so confident and unabashed in maintaining the foundations of their church as we those of our respective Congregational churches? Have we not broad-based our polity in the "will of Christ"? Are we not striving to form a *brotherhood*, to realise the highest social ideas that ever fired the human heart? The bonds that bind us are those of love, therefore let them not be lightly broken; our affinities are spiritual, therefore let them be maintained as sacred. The conviction of a Congregationalist is by its very nature the last thing that should be sacrificed to indolence, to caprice, or to worldliness.

It is the conviction of the Divine sanction for the order of our churches which will work the change which we desire to see, and that conviction we may reasonably hope will be powerfully stimulated by the *Manual of Congregationalism*. We shall then see a deeper interest taken in all the affairs of our denomination; in its meetings, its missionary and aggressive work, in its literature—periodical and permanent; the one not unworthily grappling with the duties of the hour, and the other enriched year by year with some of the finest theological and religious works of the age.

Leytonstone. WILLIAM PIERCE.

"THE DRINK DID IT."

ES, it was the drink did it, and a sad thing it was when done. But I must commence my story at the beginning.

Between nine and ten years ago, I came to Birmingham, to undertake the charge of a small, but united and peaceful church. Among the first things I did after making a cosy nest for my little ones, fitting up my book shelves, and other odd jobs of that sort, was to get possession of the members' name list, and make inquiries about sick and special cases which needed my prompt attention.

Among the rest was one case, in which a woman, wife of one whose name was down on our books as a member, was said to be very ill. With as little delay as possible, I went to the address given me. I found, indeed, that the woman was very sick, but was then just beginning to mend a bit. I sat by her bed-side, after introducing myself as the new minister, and had a long chat with her on such topics as I generally find to be most acceptable when visiting the sick, especially those of them who are, or have been, very nigh unto the gates of death, viz., God, the soul, and the spiritual life.

I read with her a few passages of Scripture, and then, with her consent, knelt by her bed-side, and asked our loving Father to bless and care for her, for her husband, and for her family.

I could not at the moment account for it, but during the whole of that visit I could not help feeling that there was something strange about this case, and I had the conviction that all was not right. She told of the fever she had had after her confinement, of the long and severe struggle through which she had passed, of the skill and attention of the doctor, of the presence, blessing, and gracious support of her Saviour, and much else beside, all which seemed right enough; but there was the impression on my mind that something remained untold.

Perhaps my readers have often had similar fancies, groundless enough, doubtless, in many cases, but correct enough in others, as time and events have shown. So it was in this case, as I soon discovered.

When I rose to leave her, she put out her thin white hand which I took in mine, and was about to bid her a good day, when her long fingers tightened more than ever on mine, and she burst into tears. I reseated myself and waited for the cloud of grief to pass away. In a few moments she was calmed, and the first thing she did was to ask the person who had been present in the room with us all the while, to leave us for a few minutes. She then poured into my ear a story of that kind which I fear is far too common to those who have to mix much with the people, but a story which in its details I would fain hope is singular as to its severity and cruelty. I must and will be brief, for space is valuable.

"I must tell you, sir, for I feel that I can hide it no longer. All this illness is the result of my husband's bad ways. For a long time he has been taking too much drink. He did not intend to get drunk, but many times this year he has done. And whenever he gets drunk, he seems to be wild. Not quite three weeks after baby was born, he came home one night in a violent state over something which had gone wrong. He was much the worse for beer, and I saw in a moment that we should have some trouble. In his drunken rage he beat the children, and several times struck me. And, sir, to make matters worse, he put me out into the yard in my night-dress, with the baby, not three weeks old, in my arms. It was a cold, wet night; but his only response to my pleading for the baby's sake, was to lock the door in my face, and leave me out shivering from head to foot. After a time, I succeeded in getting a neighbour up, who put us to bed; but the mischief was done. I took cold, had a fever, and all the rest I have told you. But, sir, it was the drink did it."

The reader can better imagine than I can describe, the state of my feelings, as I listened to this sad and pitiful recital of the woman's sufferings. There was no bitterness in her tones, for it was of her husband she spoke; and though he had proved himself unworthy of the love or regard of any woman, and deserved the scorn and frowns of men, he was still her husband, and she was not without affection for him.

Those who have had but little or no experience among those who drink and practise cruelty at home, will perhaps imagine that the poor wives of these brutes hate their husbands' names. It is not so. Their affection, their patience, their quiet endurance are a marvel to those who know them; whilst their devotion to, and their self-denial for, the men who starve and ill-use them, is a mystery which, perhaps, only those who keep the records in heaven can understand. The poor woman of whom I write was no exception to this rule.

But what was to be done? This fellow's name stood on the books of the church as a member. Clearly some action must be taken. I promised his wife I would see him. Before leaving I learned the best time at which he could be met at home. I went again, and found my visit was well timed. He was at home, surly, sour, ill-tempered, and peevish. We had a long interview, during all which I felt about in every direction for his tender spot. I believe that most men have one. It is sometimes difficult to find the last unbroken string in the human heart. But there it is somewhere; and when found, and struck by a skilful, loving, sympathetic hand, will give forth some note of sweetness which may a little break the long silence of sin which has reigned so long supreme.

At length I said to him, "Now, look here, my friend; it's no use trifling with this matter. You must sign the temperance pledge, or you are a lost and ruined man. Your present course of conduct has almost killed your wife, and will ruin you both body

and soul. You must give up the drink." Like a tiger he turned upon me, and said, quite snappishly, "I suppose you drink at home don't you?" "No," replied I, "not a drop." "You don't?" "No." "Why don't you drink? What made you give it up?" asked he. I replied, looking straight into his face as I did so, "I used to take a little, but I gave it up for the sake of such men as you." This straight shot hit him in the right place. He was silent a moment. The whole thing was so strange to him. It had its effect. He softened, changed his tone, expressed his penitence, and at the entreaty of my good wife, who accompanied me, promised to take the pledge. I had one ready, upon which he duly wrote down his name.

More than nine years have passed since then; but, he has, I believe, kept his pledge ever since. After I left that church, I did not see so much of him as before; but, whenever I met him, he always told me he was going on well, and was still keeping his pledge. The last time I saw him was only for a minute in the street as he was hurrying to the station to get a train to Bristol. He hastily told me that he had obtained a situation as foreman in that city, and was then just off to his new place. Since then I have not heard of him, but I hope and believe that he is still going on all right.

In closing this hurried sketch, I want just to ask any reader to think what might have happened, if I had not been an abstainer? I was thankful then, and have often since had occasion to be, when dealing with drinking people, that I am able to say I am an abstainer for the sake of others. Will every worker just think of this matter and ask himself, "What ought I to do?" "What would my Master do if He lived down here in person, among the busy crowds of men in which so many of all classes are lost and ruined by drink?"

Birmingham. CHARLES LEACH.

MY LITTLE BIRD.

My little bird while in the light
Could never sing my song,
Though tenderly I sang to him,
And patiently and long.

Sometimes a strain or two he caught,
Anon he lost the air,
And mingled with it other strains
He picked up here and there.

At last a curtain thick I laid
Above my wayward bird,
Then sang the song I chose for him,
While in the dark he heard.

Shut in from luring sights and sounds
He learned to sing my song,
And in the light he poured it forth
In cadence sweet and strong.

There is a song the Lord would have
His dear disciples learn,
But when the world is bright to them,
To worldly songs they turn;

And notes of revelry and mirth
They mingle with the strains
The Master long was teaching them
With so much love and pains.

Then clouds of sorrow o'er their homes
He doth in mercy bring,
And, shut in gloom, at length they learn
The song He'd have them sing—

The song of love and peace and truth,
On earth their sweetest song;
Their song of songs in realms of light
With all the joyful throng.

W. T. SLEEPER.

MISSION WORK IN BENARES.

WE have received (from T. Fisher Unwin) *Life and Work in Benares and Kumaon*, 1830-1877. James Kennedy, M.A. This book, written by a veteran of the mission field, cannot fail to be of profound interest to every one who takes it up. Sir William

THE WELL AT CAWNPORE.

Muir, in his Introductory Note, thus speaks of the man and his work:—

"I am able and glad to say that no man was ever better placed than he was for gaining a thorough knowledge of Hindustan and the various races inhabiting

it during the four decades of which he treats. I have met with none whose calm and sagacious judgment might more surely enable him to form correct conclusions, nor whose high and scrupulous principle should impart to the reader greater confidence in the fair and truthful statement of them. I regard this book as possessing a rare interest, not only for the missionary-student, but for the general reader. The amount of information it contains—descriptive, social, evangelistic, and even political—is astonishing; and the discursive, and in part autobiographical, form in which it is written renders it so easy that he who runs may read."

Benares, the sacred city of the Hindus, which they assert was at one time built "of gold, but in this degenerate age has been turned into stone and clay," is brought before the reader in a series of striking sketches, so that he retains a vivid impression of its temples, its peoples, and its great festivals. "What Jerusalem is to the Jews, what Mecca is to the Mohammedans, what Rome is to the Roman Catholics—that, and more than that, is Benares to the Hindus." They call it Kassu—the Splendid, the Glorious City. "The rites performed at Kassu have double merit, and its very soil and air are so fraught with blessing that all who die there go to heaven, whatever their creed may be."

There is a quietness of colour and calmness of tone about the book that gives it additional strength. There is no overdoing of difficulties, though they seem hard enough; there is no hiding of failures, though they often seem sad enough. The story moves along simply and straightforwardly, leaving a lasting impression of steady enterprise and brightening hope.

Besides the regular work at Benares, there are very interesting sketches given of missionary excursions into Allahabad, Agra, and other places, sometimes by land, and sometimes by water; "moving up and down the river, and halting towards evening near a town or village which I could visit for the purpose of speaking to the people about the Saviour." But voyaging on the Ganges, it seems, has gone out of fashion; and for a pretty sound reason too: "for the boat, never of the best material, was often sadly out of repair, and the boatmen were ready, when danger appeared, to throw themselves into the water, and make for the shore, leaving the passengers to shift for themselves." In 1858-9 he went on a tour to Ceylon, which has given rise to an interesting chapter.

The tale of the Indian Mutiny, though often repeated, cannot be read here without once more feeling its intense but mournful charm. The author speaks of "The Well at Cawnpore" (see previous page) thus:—"A very handsome monument of marble, surmounted by a statue of the Angel of Peace, with a suitable inscription, has been erected over the well into which the bodies of the women and children were thrown. The ground around it is kept in beautiful order."

THE EDITORS request their Correspondents kindly to write them informing them of the subject of any article they wish to offer before sending the MS. A stamped and addressed envelope should accompany the MS. if the writer desires it to be returned in case of non-acceptance. The Editors cannot hold themselves responsible for accidental loss.

"A SERMON SIX MILES LONG."

IT is impossible for me always to be in my place at church," said a good church member to his pastor, "for I have six miles to come."

"We all know that," replied the pastor; "and every time you are present you preach us a sermon six miles long, on the love of the sanctuary."

"If I do, you mustn't follow my example," replied the six-miles-man, with a merry twinkle in his eye, as he went his way.

"It is refreshing to find one thing that can't be too long," remarked the minister's friend, who had been a listener to the above passage.

"Yes, I believe a good example is the only thing that won't bear abridging," laughed the pastor; and being a wiser man than many in his generation, he boiled down his next sermon.

This is pre-eminently the day of brevity. The shortest in December can't match it. Brief! is the battle-cry of victory. Short articles for the editors. Short speeches for the Union assembly. Short sermons, short prayers, short tunes for the congregation. Short lessons for the pupil; short sessions for the teacher. Short voyages for the tourist. Short service for the labourer. Short answers have become respectful, long answers impertinent.

Only good example can never be too long. In that alone, may we speak on and on, yet never get rung down. Fragrant and fruitful as June days are the life-long sermons of patient continuance in well-doing.

JAMES HERBERT'S DIARY;

Or, Experiences with Seekers after God.

By the Rev. ROBERT TUCK, B.A., Author of "Netley Independent Chapel," "Links Wanted," &c.

III.—LED BY SYMPATHY.

THE following passage was written in the "Diary" many years after the incidents to which it refers had taken place, and when the person concerned had been long removed from the sphere of Herbert's influence. Herbert has frequently, in conversation, referred to this experience as one which had a most important influence on his own religious character, as well as on his ministerial efficiency. He speaks of it as the first time in which he really came close—heart to heart—to a struggling brother soul, and learned, once for all, that seekers

after God must be *led*, not *driven*. Happy indeed is that pastor who has been taught how to *go with his people* in their searchings after rest, and peace, and God.

A letter from George Turner came to-day. I have not heard of him, or from him, for a very long time and it has been a great joy to me to hear of his continued well-being, and of his steadfast walking in the Christly ways of righteousness. That letter has set him in my thoughts all the day; and has brought back so vividly the scenes of my early relations with him, that I can only relieve the strain of feeling by writing down the story.

George Turner's was the most difficult and most anxious case I have ever had to deal with, and so it is the one over which I rejoice with an exceeding joy; though I feel that the results of my influence, in that case, would not be thought altogether satisfactory by many who think that religious experience must always follow the recognised lines.

I was but a young pastor, and a young husband, with all the exquisite, fresh joy of the little ones about me in my home, when I made George Turner's acquaintance. I settled at the town of Swanton, in succession to an old, and old-fashioned, minister; and, very naturally, and almost as a necessity of the contrast between my predecessor and myself, my ministry made its appeal to the young folk. To them it seemed novel and interesting; I was in sympathy with sides and aspects of truth that were gaining prominence at the time; and I quickly won the love of those whose mind-eyes were just then opening to the world of thought, and the claims of religion. I suspect that I was not myself quite out of the struggling stage; I was not quite sure of my hold on *all* the eternal verities; and so what I had to say seemed very brotherly and helpful to the young folk who were just beginning to "cry for the light."

George Turner took to me at once. He was a manager in a machine-making establishment, and in pretty comfortable circumstances. He had married young, and had a little family gathering around him. He was as fond a father as I ever knew, and his heart seemed bound up in his home and his children. But I soon found that he had let his youth-time pass without more than a general association with religion, and had stepped on the threshold of life as only a moral man: upright in business, kind in the home, intelligent and inquiring in mind, and ready enough to take his share in the business departments of Church work. The claims of the Lord Jesus Christ to a direct personal affection and service had never really come home to him, often as he must have heard them presented. He was shielded all round with a thick padding of commonplace goodness, and the arrows of conviction seemed to have no chance. He had nearly everything that heart could wish, and, as yet, he had no particular need for God.

I did not know, at that time, how the Wonder-Worker deals with some souls, making awful desolations, and watching, until, out of its depths, the soul begins to put a hand and feel, to lift a voice

and cry. I could never have imagined how George Turner was to be won. Trying to be faithful in my ministry, for such as he I presented arguments for the claims of God; I sought to produce or awaken the sense of sin and need, and pressed persuasions to choose and lead the godly life; but none of these proved more than interesting to him. It was a much more important matter that I had secured his personal friendship. We had many a long talk together over the topics of the day, and the passing literature; and, though I knew it not, God was thus preparing me to fit in with His purpose of grace concerning George Turner.

As I returned home from the chapel one Sunday morning I saw his second child in the street, and as I gave her the friendly word I thought what a healthy and beautiful child she was, just the sort of child to be the pride of a home. That night she sickened; next day fever raged high; and before the next morning dawned that father stood beside a silent form, out of whose eyes had gone the light of love and life, not heart-broken, but *heart-chilled*, and hating God for the stroke with which He had smitten him.

He came to me, and I was frightened at the intensity of his grief, and at the wild way in which he had shattered every belief and every hope, and seemed to find his only comfort in the fact that he was in the midst of ruined faiths and hopes. I had made much in my preaching of the Fatherhood of God, and round that his mind seemed to turn; and I shall never forget the fierceness with which he said to me, "He can be no Father to take away my child like that!" The very tenderness of his own fatherhood was making the great Father's ways a more oppressive mystery.

I stood beside him at the little grave, and spoke the great words of Christian trust, but as yet they had no influence upon him. That night he could not rest; he came to see me. We sat in my study until the morning dawned, for he would not go, and I could not leave a soul in its agony. For long spaces of time we were silent; and then sometimes we found words; but I believe that the silence, which meant brotherly sympathy too deep for utterance, did more than the words.

He poured out the doubts, and infidelities, and hard things that he had heard other men utter, and now, in the time of his despair, imagined were true—there could be no God; the future is all a dream; death ends all; and so on. I let him talk freely, and did not try to answer him; indeed, I could not have answered him if I had tried. His grief had smitten me. I thought of my own little child, who had come in for papa's good-night kiss just before George Turner arrived; and I felt so true a sympathy with him that I just went down into the depths with him—it was all I could do—and we broke down together that night everything we had hitherto believed and hoped, and we sat there together in the empty night which we had made, with no heaven, no future, no God, no hope.

Presently I said to him, "What have we got left, George?"

"Nothing," he said, with a most pitiful sadness in his tone.

"Yes," I replied, "I can see something. There is a difference between right and wrong."

"So there is," he said, clutching at this first bit of positive truth, as the drowning man clutches the straw.

"And if there is a difference between right and wrong," I said, "somebody must have fixed the difference."

And so, from the very first stones of truth, George Turner and I built up a new faith together. Not easily. He was too keen to let one uncertain stone of truth get laid in; and so we advanced but very slowly. I saw him many times; again and again he fell back upon old Atheistical positions; but still we made steady and safe progress, and George Turner won back God, won back the Fatherhood of God, and opened his heart to receive the renewing grace of the manifested Son, and gave heart and life to the service of his Saviour.

I feared that he would never become a Christian quite after the ordinary pattern; and he has not been, and never will be. Such an experience as his gives a man so firm a grip of essentials that he is in some danger of being unduly indifferent about non-essentials. But I know this, he is heart loyal to the living Christ, he walks in Christian integrity, he spends himself in Christ's service, and no truer man names the name of Christ to-day.

If I were asked how George Turner was won, I should say, *By sympathy*. A brother soul walked right through the dark valley with him, and came out with him into the light. Sympathy can save men. Nowadays what men so sorely need is not mere preaching to them, it is *walking with them*, struggling with them. Heart to heart we must be as we lead men to Christ; and I feel that it is *pastoral* work, and not mere preaching, which is calling so loudly for our watching, and self-denial, and prayer. From one point of view the world wants 'Evangelists,' but from another it wants 'pastors,' men who can *go with* the sheep and lambs that they are called to feed and defend.

As ministers we do not worthily estimate or efficiently use the power of sympathy. I remember getting a lesson in relation to it years ago. My wife and I were impressed with the exceeding gentleness and kindness of one family in my congregation in all their relations with us; and we wondered what could have been the occasion of it, until one day the lady said, "I can never forget, when little Willie died, how you came in, and, as we looked upon the little fellow, how you *wept with me*." That was all. No words were remembered, but that sympathy had been the all-sufficing comfort and help.

I learned, once for all, from George Turner, that souls seeking after God need, above everything else, tender, loving sympathy.

CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH-AID AND HOME MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

THE COUNCIL met at the Memorial Hall, on Feb. 22nd, when there was a large attendance.

GRANTS TO ASSOCIATIONS.—It was reported that the total income of the Society for 1885, so far as it can be calculated, will amount to £27,339. In addition to this, the Committee of the Jubilee Fund will allow the Society to draw upon it to the extent of £4,000 in case of need. The whole sum available during the present year will thus be £33,339. The Council made Grants to counties to the extent of £32,562, or £787 less than they asked. To this sum must be added the amount which has to be paid directly through the central office, which will bring the liabilities up to £34,173, leaving £834 to be added to the income during the year. The amounts promised by the several Associations towards the General Fund, and the Grants made to them, are as follow :—

	Promised.	Granted.
Berks and South Oxon...	£231	£451
Bucks, North	204	484
Cambridgeshire	170	305
Cheshire	670	630
Cornwall...	187	302
Cumberland	191	471
Derbyshire	389	464
Devonshire, East ...	179	468
,, North ...	275	455
,, South ...	570	705
Dorsetshire	385	625
Durham & Northmbrlnd.	295	395
Essex	1,072	1,065
Gloucester and Hereford	2,200	1,800
Hampshire	676	941
Hertfordshire	310	590
Huntingdonshire ...	100	40
Kent	560	860
Lancashire	2,990	2,640
Leicestershire	440	670
Lincolnshire	254	354
London and Middlesex...	4,500	2,500
Monmouthshire	201	351
Norfolk	362	592
Northamptonshire ...	340	470
Nottinghamshire ...	420	420
Shropshire	222	422
Somersetshire	828	1,268
Staffordshire, North ...	366	366
,, South ...	675	750
Suffolk	453	678
Surrey	631	811
Sussex	1,099	1,399
Wales, North	774	1,039
,, South	310	860
Warwickshire	625	625
Wilts and East Somerset	350	500
Worcestershire	210	330
Yorkshire	3,526	3,526

ANNUAL MEETINGS.—The Retiring Council will meet on Monday, May 11th, at 2 p.m. The Seventh Annual Meeting of the Society will be held on Tuesday, May 12th, at 6.30 p.m. The New Council will meet on Thursday, May 14th, at 4.30 p.m. The Meetings will be held at the Memorial Hall.

CRITICAL POSITION OF THE SOCIETY.—As stated, the Society is once more permitted to draw upon the Jubilee Fund to the extent of £4,000 during the year. But this permission has been accompanied by the intimation that this will be the last grant to be expected from this source in aid of annual expenditure. In this serious position of the Society the Council, after careful deliberation, resolved to appoint a Special Committee to consider the financial position of the Society, the causes which hinder the increase of its income, and the means to be adopted to promote its efficiency. The following gentlemen were afterwards elected on this Committee :—Revs. J. Browne, B.A., Dr. Bruce, W. F. Clarkson, B.A., R. M. Davies, E. J. Dukes, J. E. Flower, M.A., G. B. Johnson, A. Mackennal, B.A., A. D. Philps, Arnold Thomas, M.A., J. Williamson, M.A., Messrs. Wm. Anderton, T. J. Hankinson, T. W. Harrison, G. W. Knox, J. A. Le Lacheur, N. P. Sharman, J. Scrutton, A. J. Shepheard, Albert Spicer, and Halley Stewart. It will not be out of place again *most earnestly* to emphasise the necessity of appointing *collectors* in connection with every church. There are many congregations in which the objects and claims of the Society are most imperfectly understood, and some in which they are hardly understood at all. It is for the Executives of our County Associations to stir up both pastors and deacons to greater and more earnest diligence in this matter.

CHURCH-AID AND HOME MISSIONARY WORK.

WHAT IS BEING DONE IN DORSET.

[WE hope to furnish a series of special sketches showing what the Church-Aid Society is doing in various parts of England and Wales. The pens of competent writers have been secured for this series, which it is thought will prove deeply interesting to all who take an interest in Home Missionary work. We are indebted to the Rev. Joseph Ogle, of Sherborne, for the following sketch. All information as to the work of the Society may be obtained from the Secretary, Rev. Edwin J. Hartland, at the Memorial Hall, Farringdon-street, London.]

THE agricultural labourer having now been assured of the franchise, the supreme question of the hour with all political parties is, "What will he do with it?" We have no intention of playing the part of prophet, or attempting to forecast the political future. We simply desire to take advantage of the fact that universal interest is felt in the agricultural classes, to call attention to the existence of churches among them which will no doubt help to give complexion to that future, and whose work and whose claims are too often forgotten. For this purpose, we select the almost purely agricultural county of Dorset—a county which has neither manufactures nor mineral wealth to create great towns and attract notice. It is only one of many such counties; and the facts which we propose to lay before our readers will have a much wider application than the area from which they have been collected, and will go, unless we are mistaken, to show the urgent call there is for enthusiastic sympathy and hearty and generous support of the Church-Aid and Home Missionary Society. They will show that Dr. Hannay did not exaggerate the case when he said that the fate of English Congregationalism is largely bound up with the future of this Society.

In this county there is an estimated population of 183,000, scattered over an area rather more than half as large as Lancashire. Among this population we have thirty-one churches and some twenty mission stations. About one-third of the churches are in towns of from 4,000 to 13,000 inhabitants, the rest are in villages, most of them very small. When it is remembered that the population is not aggregated in any one part of the county, but fairly distributed over the whole, and that these churches are likewise pretty evenly distributed, it will be obvious that they lie at a considerable distance apart and have to supply wide districts. But readers will not know, unless they are told, that in most cases the village churches are not only the only representatives of Nonconformity, but of evangelical religion in these districts. At least half-a-dozen districts could be pointed out, in which, but for these little churches, there would be no place, not even a Methodist chapel, in areas varying from twenty-five to fifty square miles, where the simple Gospel of Jesus is proclaimed—nothing would be left except churches given over to sacerdotalism. These little churches keep alive the torch of truth, and provide that training

for the use of free institutions which is the inseperable accompaniment of our form of church government. They are as solitary and as beneficent as lighthouses.

We are so much in the habit of worshipping bigness, that it is hard to make an outsider understand the amount of good and lasting work which these little communities manage to accomplish. Nowhere is the Christian ideal, "One is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren," more fully realised. Nowhere is a chance attendant, however poor, so speedily marked or so cordially welcomed. Nowhere is a man so soon missed from his accustomed place in the sanctuary, or so quickly sought out. The very thing that seems most objectionable in village life, the fact that everybody know everybody's business, makes it impossible for a member to backslide very far—at all events, irretrievably—before the pastor will become aware of it, and with remonstrance and entreaty, with a love and firmness that are not easily shaken off, seek to lead the wanderer back into the narrow path, and so save him from making shipwreck of himself and disgracing the cause of Christ. No one with any talent, be it never so small, fails to be discovered and pressed into the service of the church, the Sunday-school, or the Band of Hope. Discipline is rigorously maintained. A case came under the writer's notice quite recently, where, in one of the smallest of these churches, two families were suspended from attendance at the Lord's Table, because they were known to be living in enmity and refused to be reconciled. A broad line, evident to everybody, divides the church from the world; and the professing Christian is made to feel that he is a living epistle known and read of all men. And, as the Rev. John Browne pointed out in his speech before the Union at Manchester, nowhere are our peculiar institutions and our distinguishing doctrines more clearly understood or more firmly grasped. In fact, just as there are no places where it is healthier for a child to grow up than in our sweet rural districts, so there is no atmosphere anywhere more wholesome—more conducive to the spiritual life, than the simple, homely atmosphere of a rural church. All this is true, no doubt, of the village churches of other counties, but it is pre-eminently true of the smaller churches of Dorset. And we have reason for thankfulness that Congregationalism provides for such a large proportion of the people in the agricultural counties—providing for over six per cent. of the population of Dorset according to the most recent statistics.

But it is not by the apparent results of their work that the value of these churches must be estimated. They are doing a much larger work than appears on the surface. In every congregation in the county a visitor would notice numbers of young men and women —many of them apprentices or servants; among whom are found some of the most earnest members, teachers and workers. In a very short time they will almost all of them have disappeared. As soon as their apprenticeship is finished, young people are compelled to remove in search of employment. Many go to London, some to

the great towns of the Midlands or the North, and others emigrate. They leave the old home and the little sanctuary behind them, but in hundreds of cases they do not leave their religion, their zeal for Christ, or their Congregational principles behind them; these they carry with them, though they go to the ends of the earth. Many illustrations could be given, but a couple must suffice.

Some time ago a Quaker in one of the Midland counties, who was in the habit of driving a few miles every Sunday to Meeting, noticed that he passed a very tidy young woman on the road, about the same place every Sunday. Observing that, no matter how wet the weather, or how bad the roads were, the same figure was passed trudging in his direction, he guessed that she must be going to service in the same town. He therefore resolved to pull up and inquire, and give her a lift by the way. He did so, and found that she was employed some miles away from the nearest Congregational chapel, and instead of settling down to go to some other place of worship, she walked five miles into the town every Sunday, attended the services, taught in the Sunday-school, and then walked five miles back again. Further inquiries elicited the information that she had spent her early life, grown up, and received her religious teaching in connection with the church at Cripplestyle, in Dorset. Two years ago a young man left another rural church in this county—at Broadwindsor. After vainly seeking employment in this country, he decided to take an assisted passage to Queensland. The writer gave him letters of introduction. An emigrant ship is not usually considered a heaven upon earth. There are few places where it needs more courage to confess Christ. But that is what this young man did; nay, he did more, he urged the claims of Christ upon his companions, set his face against gambling and intemperance, and became a sort of unofficial chaplain to the ship. On landing he at once sought out the Congregational church, offered to help in any Christian work, and was lately the only male teacher in the Sunday-school. These cases, which are only specimens of scores of others which happen every year, are drawn from the humbler walks of life—from the class whose movements are seldom chronicled, and are often difficult to trace. Most of those who leave Dorset are of that class when they leave; but they do not always remain in it. The Dorset labourer has little of the restless, self-assertive spirit of the artizans in great cities. He orders himself lowly and reverently to all his betters, and tries to make the best of that station in life to which it has pleased God to call him. And, in consequence, he has often been the subject of ridicule and cheap contempt. But he is not wanting in natural ability. His children make a higher percentage of passes at the visits of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools than the children in almost any other county. And when he is transplanted into more favourable conditions, and opportunities of rising are presented to him, he rarely fails to take advantage of them. Among those who have left humble cottage homes here, can be counted honoured ministers, missionaries, deacons, Sunday-school superintendents, and active workers in

connection with our churches all over the land and in all our colonies—men of whom any church might well be proud. And this larger work must be taken into account, if any just estimate is to be formed of what the small and obscure churches of Dorset are doing. The seed is sown here—the harvest is garnered elsewhere.

(*To be concluded next month.*)

OUR LIBRARY TABLE.

After Work, published by Banks & Son, is a capital penny monthly Magazine for home reading. The *Congregational Almanac*, from the same publishers, continues yearly to improve.

The Congregationalist is now published at the reduced price of sixpence monthly, without portraits. The numbers from January to March do credit to the head and heart of the esteemed editor, the Rev. J. Guinness Rogers. Many of the articles are of permanent value. We gladly repeat our hearty recommendation of a magazine which deserves a largely increased circulation. It is published by Hodder & Stoughton.

The need of a little Handbook like *The Blackboard in the Sunday School*, has been long felt. To aid the teacher in enlightening the infant mind, the blackboard is invaluable. The literary portion, by Mr. Benjamin Clarke, embraces "a plea for the use of the Blackboard," not only in the infant, but also in the junior and senior, classes. The instructions on the use of the chalk, given by Mr. F. Beard, are really helpful. A number of illustrative addresses are also furnished. It is a valuable little work and ought to be widely circulated. It is published by the S. S. Union, 56, Old Bailey.

From the same office we have received *Zoological Photographs*, a very instructive and interesting volume, descriptive of the lower forms of animal life. The work is written in a conversational manner, aided by numerous illustrations, and may be used as an introduction to the systematical study of Zoology. Such chapters as "The History of a Sponge," "Worms," "The Autobiography of a Fly," "Baby Butterflies," "Bread and Honey," cannot but be both amusing and instructive, impressing the mind of the reader with the wisdom and goodness of God.

From Messrs. James Nisbet & Co. we have received the following:—*Man's Departure, and the Invisible World*, by G. H. H. Oliphant-Ferguson. This little work, which is in its second edition, professes to be a collection of "facts and experiences," not of its author, but of men and women of more or less celebrity. It is, therefore, as he says in his preface, very largely composed of quotations. There will ever remain a strange interest attaching to the subject of man's passage into the unseen world, but our own is perhaps a time when this is abnormally true. Men will therefore welcome a volume which contains the opinions, the experiences, and the sayings of notable men and women in prospect of the great change, or when stepping upon its threshold. True, we are not told much more, apart from quotations from the Scriptures, than is told by the ghost of Hamlet's father, who discreetly masks even the great poet's ignorance of the great mystery, by saying that

> "This eternal blazon must not be
> To ears of flesh and blood."

None the less, however, thoughtful and devout spirits will find much interest in this very wide collection of facts and opinions concerning the "great migration."

The Prophets of the Old Testament, by M. D. H. This is a volume intended for mothers for the impartation of Biblical instruction to their elder children. The idea of the volume is a good one, and is fairly well carried out. After a preliminary chapter upon some of the earlier prophets, the principal prophetical writings are given in the form of brief, clear abstracts, with such words of explanation as would be needful by young people, while at the close of each section a selection of appropriate Scripture passages is given. The book in the hands of a wise mother would, no doubt, help both herself and her children in understanding what is often to both a very obscure portion of the Word of God.

THE TEACHERS' PAGE.

INTERNATIONAL LESSONS FOR APRIL.

WE left the great Apostle a prisoner at Cæsarea, waiting for the earliest opportunity of journeying to Rome, that his case might be tried at the Imperial Court. It had been fully demonstrated that he was not guilty of any crimes of which Roman courts could take notice; but, when once his appeal had been allowed, the local authorities could not interfere, and to Rome he must be sent. This month's lessons (Acts xxvii., xxviii.) give the detailed account of his voyage, shipwreck, and land journey; incidents occurring during his sojourn at Malta; and last glimpses of the Apostle and of his labours while waiting for his trial—an unusual delay having been occasioned by the loss of the legal documents in the time of the shipwreck.

This series of lessons is unusually full of materials for securing the interest of the children. The course of the voyage is to be traced; the experiences of the tempest have to be realised; the peculiarities of ancient ships and boats require to be studied; the incidents connected with anchoring the ship; running her ashore; her breaking up; and the last struggle to get all the passengers safely landed, have to be pictured; and sympathy may be called forth for the soaked and miserable company gathered round the blazing fire of hard-stemmed heather.

Following the line taken in previous "Pages," we try to suggest some of those more important truths and lessons which parents and teachers should seek to impress. Throughout the quarter we are to be learning all we can from the person, character, conduct, and teachings of *one man*, on whom the grace of God rested abundantly. And now we have a few closing glimpses of him, and are to gather up and complete the impressions which we have formed concerning him. It is well that the Apostle of the Gentiles should be *left* in the chief Gentile city. Legends tell of later missions, and of a martyr's death; but Scripture leaves off its record with the picture of the devoted man, overcoming all his disabilities, and preaching, and teaching, and writing, to the very end, for the glory of the Christ whom he loved.

It is singular that we should have preserved for us so minute and detailed an account of this journey to Rome. It is very easy to say that Luke was Paul's companion at the time, and shared his experiences; and that, as Luke was of quite a literary turn of mind, he felt a personal pleasure in narrating these events. That explanation only goes a very little way, and does not take account of the Divine 'Inspiration' which arranged the Word for the spiritual profit of all the ages.

A much better suggestion is, that we needed to have a closing impression of the character and spirit of this great Apostle. Looking over the figure of Paul, and his relations with others, as given in these two chapters, we see the following things; and, if teachers will add them to the points of character previously dwelt on, they will have a very full idea of the example Paul sets, and of the lessons which his noble life was designed to teach.

Our space forbids more than the statement of the things we can see in Paul's closing scenes, but the illustration of them will not be difficult to any earnest teacher.

1. *Natural Power of Command.*—Like that of General Gordon. Seen in the influence he gained in the ship, and at Malta.

2. *Faith, as a Practical Force in Daily Life.*—Compare the fears of all in the ship, and the quietness and confidence of the Apostle.

3. *Self-Control Responding to the sense of God's Presence.*—Because God stood by him, Paul had all his faculties at command.

4. *Watchfulness for Opportunity of doing Good Works.*—Seen at Melita. Paul healed that he might make hearing ears, ready to listen to the message of Jesus the Saviour. Seen also at Rome.

5. *The Intensity of the Man who has Strong Convictions.*—See Paul's powerful reproach of the unbelieving Jews.

6. *The Consecration of Disabilities to God's Service.*—Not even a soldier chained to him day and night should keep him from carrying out his resolve, "Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death."

ROBERT TUCK.

A REMINISCENCE OF THE MONTH OF MAY.

THIS is "The merry month of May," as Spenser first calls it in his "Shepherd's Calendar," "when all is clad with pleasance." The earlier promise of the spring has already gladdened us, and weeks have passed since our children came home with gay bunches of primroses and violets gathered from the bespangled hedgerows of our country lanes, or from their lone hiding-places in the quiet woods. Still, we have not got beyond the promise of the year; and several months more will have their story to tell of faithfulness on earth and in heaven, before our eyes shall feast on the richly laden harvest-fields. It is, in some senses, a busy month in town; for are not the May meetings to be crowded as in the long years past? Perhaps we shall have the "flowers of rhetoric." Certainly we shall need to remember that there is danger in too much talk; and we shall miserably deceive ourselves if we suppose that all the fresh inspirations that enkindle new hope, and so quickly ripen into resolve, as we experience the gladness of communion with many fellow-workers, are of themselves sufficient to ensure a faithful service when we separate and pass away again to the different paths of plodding duty. The speech, if it be truly silvern, must needs have its own later harvest in the golden patient silence of unobtrusive, constant self-sacrifice, found in what our fathers quaintly called a "painful ministry" amongst the crowds of the careless and neglectful, or in the devotion of quiet village pastorates; for, in both alike, the genius of a true ministry consists in "an infinite capacity for taking pains." The narrowest path will give us "room to deny ourselves, a road to bring us, daily, nearer God." "I have scarcely time to pray," was the startling word of good Bishop Selwyn amid the onerous duties of his later diocese of Lichfield; and he found a kind of sad comfort in the old saying, "*Qui laborat orat*," or, as we should say, "To work is to pray." We have often heard a desire expressed, that some portion of our conferences in May and October could be more distinctly devotional in character, and might more directly bear upon the tone and temper of that inward life which needs such constant renewal if its fruits of outward service are to be true and abiding. The desire, it can scarcely be doubted, has its secret spring in that oppressive sense of the weight of many cares to which the saying of the hard-worked Bishop pointed. The Anglican clergy find their relief in the now well-known appointment of retreats, wherein little groups of them for a while separate themselves from the world, that they may together wait on God, and in the practice of His presence minister to each other's spiritual need. It is easy

to criticise such arrangements, to point out a strange aspect of asceticism in them; and in their exclusive bearing upon clerical life it might seem to be implied that the souls of the so-called laity could be safely left to their proper lower levels. But, after all criticism, wise or carping, few, I think, would venture to say that the good did not far out-measure the evil. Meetings of a more friendly and homely order seem more consonant with Nonconformist usage. But the history of early Nonconformity contains one passage of peculiarly touching beauty, speaking of refreshment sought and found in a most solitary retreat, which may well be remembered by us this month of May.

Two hundred years ago, in Lancashire, there was one who every year betook himself to such a retreat. This month, so famous now for church assemblies, was, with the gentle Isaac Ambrose, long of Preston and then the ejected minister of Garstang, an appointed time for solitary meditation and prayer, some record of which has come down to us in a fragment, preserved almost by accident.

In the "sweet woods of Widdicre," which he called his "best school of theology," almost within hearing of the pleasant murmur of the Darwen, from which at that time the salmon-trout leaped, he built or found for himself, after the fashion of the American Thoreau, but from a devotion which had deeper springs, a little hut, and to that hut year by year he retired and held with the Almighty, all-loving Friend of his soul, communion which has been set forth in such words as these—a few which we may cull from the fragment just referred to:—

"May 13th.—I retired to a solitary and silent place to practise specially the secret duties of a Christian. My ground is that of Cant. vii. 11, 12: 'Come, my beloved, let me go forth into the field,' &c. The bridegroom of our souls (said Bernard) is bashful, and more frequently visits his bride in the solitary places.

"May 15th.—I fell on the duty of self-trial, and in the morning confessed my sins before and since conversion, wherein the Lord sweetly melted my heart. In the evening I perused my diary for the last year, wherein are many passages of mercies from God and trouble for sin, &c.

"May 17th.—This day, in the morning, I meditated on the love of Christ, wherein Christ appeared and melted my heart in many sweet passages. Surely the touches of God's Spirit are as sensible as any outward touches. Allelujah.

"May 19th.—In the former part of the day I exercised the life of faith, when the Lord strengthened me to act faith on several promises, both temporal, spiritual, and eternal. . . . . In the evening I considered the duty of prayer, observed some workings of God's Spirit in my perusing the rules, and afterwards in the practice of this duty. Blessed be God!

"May 31st.—I practised (as the Lord enabled) the duty of saints' sufferings; into which condition as I was cast, so the Lord gave me to see my sin and to bewail it, and to pray for the contrary grace and God's favour. The Lord was sweet to me in the preparation to, but especially in the improving of, sufferings. Now the Spirit left in my soul a sweet scent and savour behind it. Amen, Amen."*

Surely here was more than a school of theology; this was Bethel, the House of God. We may make allowance for the quaint expressions of the time, so natural to the meditative Puritan: but

* The fragment is given complete in Dr. Halley's *Lancashire Puritanism and Nonconformity*.

who would not have the help, at fitting seasons, and in methods suited to our modern needs, of such special communings with God? Who, above all, would not know the daily life, however occupied with busy cares, which should not be out of harmony with the music of such words?

Ambrose lived only two years after the ejectment, but no circumstances could make alteration in the general method of his life. The close of that beautiful life of communion with God had a natural accord with all that had gone before. It is thus described in the *Nonconformists' Memorial*: "When his end drew near, he was very sensible of it. Having taken his leave of many of his friends abroad with unusual solemnity, as if he foresaw that he should see them no more, he came home, and set all things in order. In a little while some of his hearers came from Garstang to visit him. He discoursed freely with them, gave them good counsel, told them he was now ready whenever his Lord should call, and that he had finished all he designed to write, having the night before sent away his discourse concerning angels to the press. He accompanied his friends to their horses, and when he came back shut himself in his parlour, the place of his soliloquy, meditation, and prayer. Being thought to stay long, the door was opened, and he was found just expiring." One thinks of the beautiful saying of the Duchesse de Broglie shortly before dying, "I have too much talked with God to have any fear."

Northampton. T. GASQUOINE.

RELIGION BELOW THE ELBOWS.

A CURIOUS kind of religion that must be! my readers will exclaim. "We have heard of head religion and heart religion, but this is the first time our attention has been directed to a connection of religion with the elbows, unless it be an awkward way of using the expression 'out at the elbows'"! Its origin was on this wise. For many years it was my privilege to enjoy a somewhat intimate acquaintance with the Rev. Horace Bushnell, our churches and residences being not far separated. On one occasion I was praising the earnestness and activity that characterised the Western churches, and the manner in which they carried into church work the enterprise which they display in business pursuits. Suddenly the Doctor looked up, with one of his searching glances, and said, in his own idiomatic way, "I will tell you what is the difficulty with the Western style of religion: it is too much below the elbows!"

Many a time have I turned that queer phrase over in my mind, and considered its meaning and application. "Below the elbows" must refer to the forearms and hands. Certainly the human animal would be poorly off without this part of his organism.

answer to speak disrespectfully of these useful extremities. But then imagine a man alive only below his elbows! And these parts to be in perpetual motion! A kind of jumping-jack! Or a very busy saw-mill, with an endless up and down activity! The conception makes one shudder, and then grow weary of the monotonous unrest. We must have a man with a beating heart and a thinking brain—a man alive and active in every part, and also capable of quiet thought and fruitful imagination, of searching investigation and glowing sentiment.

Allowing this, what is the application to personal piety and to religious characteristics? What is the type of religion of which Dr. Bushnell could say that it was "too much below the elbows"? Let us coolly inquire into the facts. The idea of the Doctor's sharp phrase was that he thought that, in Western Christians, the outward largely predominated over the inward; that the hands were more employed than the head and heart; that religion had not in it enough of elevated thought, calm purpose, quiet meditation, holy reverence, lofty ideas, and symmetry and refinement of spiritual character. He deemed it too exclusively busy with external activities, with a round of visible duties, with a bustling stir, with an ambition to point to conspicuous results, that can be numbered and measured and weighed—so many committees organised, so many societies formed, so many meetings held, so many entertainments given, so much money raised, so many edifices built, so many scholars in the Sunday-school, so many new congregations gathered. Probably he had in view the Martha type of religion, the "much-serving" tendency, which rushes round the spiritual house with a frantic zeal to have the hands "doing" something every moment, as the only way of honouring the Master, and forgetful that He is equally pleased with the Marys who take time to sit at His feet, to look lovingly into His face, and to feed upon His gracious and instructive words.

We do not want the activity which takes the place of love, but the activity which springs from love. There may be much of the "Lo here!" and "Lo there!" and very little of the "kingdom of God within" the soul. In other words, the temptation to substitute social pleasure, or denominational ambition, or the outward prosperity of one's own congregation and church for personal devotion to the Lord Jesus Christ is to substitute the hands for the heart.

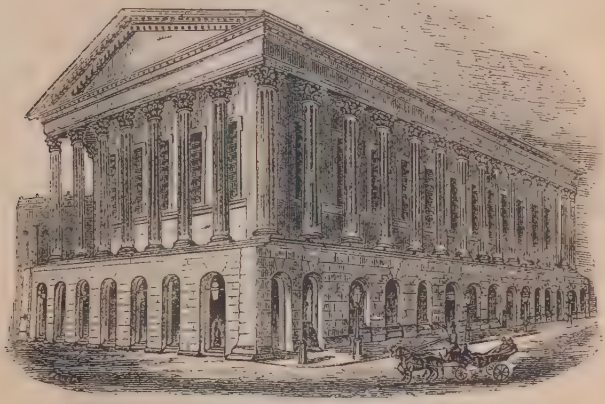
Any valuable power of the activity which we call "doing" resides largely in its being the representative of Christian character. A single word spoken, a single deed done, in the very spirit of the Lord Jesus, by a soul in constant communion with Him, is worth for spiritual results a thousand words and deeds not thus inspired, and which only yield festivity and amusement. Let us aim to have a religion uniting the agency of the head, heart, and hands—a religion which shall have dignity and efficiency, repose and action, intelligence and sentiment, spirituality and enterprise.

W. W. Patton, D.D.

FORWARD!

[A SUNDAY AFTERNOON TALK WITH WORKING PEOPLE IN THE TOWN HALL, BIRMINGHAM, JAN. 25, 1885, BY THE REV. CHARLES LEACH.]

O-DAY I have for my subject the motto of Birmingham—"FORWARD!" If ever a town were true to its motto, I think ours is. For our social, religious, and philanthropic life we have gained the praise of men; whilst our advanced political notions, and the freedom we have to hold and express them, win for us the admiration of our friends and the strong dislike of our enemies.



BIRMINGHAM TOWN HALL.

The fourteenth chapter of Exodus, from which I take my topic, records an event which happened shortly after the Israelites left the land of slavery, and faced the home of freedom. The oppressor, repenting of his folly in letting the slaves depart, was seized with a desire to bring them back, and so pursued them with his chariots and horsemen. Moses and his people were encamped at the Red Sea, in a rocky ravine, when Pharaoh and his men overtook them. Escape was impossible. Before them was the sea, which they had no boats to cross with; on either hand were the rocks, which walled them in; whilst, behind them, approached the merciless enemy.

It was a critical moment—a time to test their strength and to try their courage. But what little courage there was among them soon left them. It seemed to this great horde of men that they

were forsaken of God, deceived by the man Moses, and brought forth to this place simply to be massacred. Pale with fear, and trembling at the thought of death, they cried to Moses, "Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness?"

I have no time now to dwell upon thoughts suggested by this conduct of theirs. I can only just indicate that all they seemed to fear was death. Let them live, even if their life were that of a down-trodden slave. Let them live, even if their male children were cast into the river, and the children's fathers mercilessly driven and beaten to their daily task. This people had not yet learned that there are worse things than death. It did not occur to them that it may be better to fall free than to stand as slaves. These thoughts I leave.

I go on to notice the conduct of the only man among them who seems to have kept a good heart, and to whose courage and manliness they owed their deliverance. In the midst of their wild wails of despair, I can see him take his stand upon some rocky shelf, and address them in words of encouragement. Echoing right across the centuries, I can hear his brave words which rekindled their dying hopes, and once more rallied them to efforts for freedom. "Fear ye not; stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which He will show to you to-day." Then lifting his hand, and pointing to the sea, he cried, "*Forward.*" Forward they went, crossed the sea, found deliverance, and sang a song of gladness and triumph.

This narrative has many important lessons for you working people, and all people of these modern days. I am among those who believe that the Old Testament is a living book for all time. It speaks to us of God's Providence in history. It shows us how God takes an interest in human affairs, and reveals His gracious purpose in the redemption of mankind by Jesus Christ. And this narrative is no exception. I want to put before you to-day two or three things which it suggests to us.

1. *That the path of duty often lies straight across the sea of difficulty.* I dare say some of you have found this out long ago. Many a struggle, many a self-denial, and many a long day's toil bear witness to this fact. Many of the world's best men have found life to be no mere pleasure garden, no simple holiday. I like to see soldiers at their drill, dressed in their Sunday best, all clean, smart, and orderly. I have witnessed more than one military review. The men looked well. But nobody knows better than the English soldier that all days are not review days. There come days of wearisome marches; nights of restless watching; hours of fatal and horrible battle, when the fair earth is crimsoned with the blood of the slain, and the night is made sad with the groans of the dying, whose light goes out with no mother, wife, nor sister to hold his dying hand.

I dare say most of you are aware that the path of sin—the way of the man who cares nothing for duty, and but little for anything except his own ease and pleasure—is pictured as exceeding broad

at its entrance, and filled with all sensual delights; whilst the path of duty—the way of the man who thinks life is given for high and noble purposes—is described as narrow at its entrance, and as containing many thorns. These are no mere fancy pictures—they are as true as life itself.

Yes, yes, men, young men, you will find, as Moses did, that duty will not always bring you a sort of feather-bed enjoyment. Joseph did not find it so. Daniel did not find it so. The Apostles of Jesus had to trample on thorns. Luther was not always in peace and ease. Poor old Bunyan had to cross many a sea of difficulty before he passed over the river of death, and entered the celestial city. So is it with the men of our own day. Find the man who has laboured for others, and I will show you the man who has had to face the sea. Does he seek to make the people's bread cheap? Then he is driven from office. Does he try to shorten the hours of labour in factories for women and little children? Then he is sorely abused. Does he raise an outcry about rotten coffin ships in which men are sent to the bottom of the sea? Then he must face a storm of insult and malice. Does he seek to do justice to poor, starving, down-trodden Irish tenants? Does he seek to protect this class of weak men against the strong who have oppressed them for generations? Does he say to those who neither toil nor spin, that they shall no longer rob those who do? Then upon his head there comes such a shower of malignant hate and spite as we have seldom seen. If these great men, who have so unselfishly toiled for the public good, have had, whilst doing their duty, to cross the sea of difficulty, how can we expect to escape? But let us go on to the next point.

2. *Difficulties vanish when bravely faced.* Wasn't it so here? Forward, said Moses. Never mind the sea. Face it. If its waters are deep, God can divide them. They obeyed, and, to their surprise, they got safely over.

So I say to you who hear me now, Face the difficulty. You want to rise; you desire to get on; you are anxious to have a good name. Then face the sea. Never turn your back upon a duty because it is difficult. Napoleon the First once had a Scotch prisoner of war brought before him. The Scotchman was a good player on the bagpipe, and played to amuse Napoleon. "Play me a lively air," said the Emperor. It was done. "Play me a march." That was done, and done well. "Now," said Napoleon, "play me a retreat." "Nay, nay," said the piper, "I can't; for I never learned to play a retreat." My friends, that is one of the secrets of success in life's battle—never to play a retreat when duty says, March.

A poor, drinking man—of that class of whom I am sorry there are so many, not simply among workmen, but among all classes—sunk down very low, was induced to sign the temperance pledge, and make a new start for life. A day or two after, he was met by a publican at whose house he had spent much of his hard-earned money, and more of his valuable time. Anxious to get him

back among his customers, he tried to laugh the poor fellow out of his temperance. "What a fool you are to think of being teetotal. Why, Jack, you know you can't keep the pledge. So come along, man; you might as well come first as last." The poor fellow was very much stung. What sparks of manliness were left in him caught fire, and he replied to the taunt, "I can't keep the pledge? Can't I? Then," said he, with much feeling, "I will die *trying* to do it." That's the spirit in which to face difficulties if you want to see them vanish.

Hard work, a brave heart, faith in God, and your face toward Canaan will bring you over the sea. A rich manufacturer, who began his life very poor, was once asked if he would tell a number of friends how he had managed to rise. What was the secret of his success? His answer was short and sharp—"A pair of shirt sleeves." That's it. Shirt sleeves. Work, courage, manliness. These are the things to help men.

I have sometimes seen women cleaning the fire-irons and doing about the fire and the hearth with gloves on their hands. I suppose they were afraid to soil their pretty white fingers. They always seem to me very comical. I well remember once seeing a Methodist parson, with more bounce than brains, and with more pride than piety, enter the pulpit and begin the service with black kid gloves on his hands. All through that service I was thinking that "Cats in mittens catch no mice." Now it is nothing to me if servants will clean in gloves, and if parsons will go into the pulpit in black kids; but, my friends, if you want to win in life, if you wish to cross the seas of difficulty, you will have to bare your hands and turn up your sleeves, unless you are far more highly favoured than I have been.

Whatever your position, do your best. Never mind your poor and lowly start. These Jews were slaves; their leader was the son of a slave. Many of the world's heroes had to begin at the bottom. If you are there, work well. The Mayor of an English town was once taunted, by some rude, vulgar fellow, because he used to be a bill-poster. "Yes," said the Mayor; "I was a bill-poster; but didn't I always post my bills well?" There are volumes in that sentence.

I have heard that somewhere in one of the cathedrals of Europe there is a most beautiful stained-glass window, which is often much praised because of its chaste design and exquisite workmanship. The story is that the man who made it was an ordinary workman, who begged from his master the scraps of glass which were thrown away as useless. Out of these scraps, in his spare time, he made this window which is now so much admired. If our opportunities and privileges are but as so many broken fragments of waste glass, let us use them well. If, with faith in God, we breast the waves, some day the fragments may appear as the beautiful window of a good character, through which the light of life will shine, and behind which the song of freedom and joy may be sung.

3. *The outcome of all this is, go* FORWARD. Some of you—many

of you, I trust—are engaged in work for the social elevation of your fellows. Your friendly societies, clubs, and trades unions need your help. Let them have it, and seek to carry the work forward.

Yes, go forward in your temperance movements. Carry the standard higher and still higher. In these last days the glorious work has gone ahead with great leaps and bounds. Not only have thousands of the workers become sober, but professional men Christian men and women, have joined the great temperance army. Keep it going forward.

You politicians do well to adopt this motto. You have all got votes now. That surely is a forward movement. But be sure that the men to whom you give them shall be men who will go forward too. It is not for me here and now to address you on the various points of political warfare. But one thing I must say to you, and say with such emphasis as I can, vote only for those men who will help to make it easy for all men to do right, and hard for all men to do wrong.

Then, too, I want you to go forward in religious things. I am a a little concerned lest some of you should not advance in these matters as it is your duty to do. I admire your zeal and enthusiasm in various social and political movements; but it will be a pity for you if these things take all your attention and time. I once heard of a local preacher whose own children grew up very ignorant in religious things. When questioned about it, the preacher said, "I am so busy preaching the Gospel that I have no time to devote to my children." In like manner it might be said of you that you spend so much time in these other matters that your own souls are neglected. My advice to you is not to abate your zeal in the other things, but increase it in religious matters. "Seek first the kingdom of God." Leave the land of Egyptian bondage, cross the sea of life's difficulty, but do it all, as did Moses, in the name and strength of that God whose Son redeemed us by His death. And all along the line let your one motto be, Forward!

"Forward! be our watchword,
  Steps and voices joined;
Seek the things before us,
  Not a look behind.
Burns the fiery pillar
  At our army's head;
Who shall dream of shrinking,
  By our Captain led?
Forward through the desert,
  Through the toil and fight;
Canaan lies before us,
  Zion beams with light."

THE fathers sleep; but men remain
As wise, as true and brave as they.
Why count the loss and not the gain?
The best is that we have to-day.

J. G. WHITTIER.

CHURCH-AID AND HOME MISSIONARY WORK.

WHAT IS BEING DONE IN DORSET—*(Concluded).*

[WE hope to furnish a series of special sketches showing what the Church-Aid Society is doing in various parts of England and Wales. The pens of competent writers have been secured for this series, which it is thought will prove deeply interesting to all who take an interest in Home Missionary work. We are indebted to the Rev. Joseph Ogle, of Sherborne, for the following sketch. All information as to the work of the Society may be obtained from the Secretary, Rev. Edwin J. Hartland, at the Memorial Hall, Farringdon-street, London.]

OUR aided churches are doing a good work in the face of very great and in many cases almost overwhelming difficulties. Wages are low, and, as the churches are small, it hardly needs to be pointed out that they must be poor. The average stipend of the ministers of the aided churches, including the value of manses, where there are any, does not exceed £75 a year. Then there is the old story, which people have heard until they are sick and tired of it, of sparse and diminishing population, of small towns and villages forsaken for the great towns—a story which is accepted by those who do not feel the pinch of it with as much composure as a statement of the law of gravitation, and which no more stirs men's blood or evokes their sympathy than the set of the Gulf Stream. And yet it is a terrible fact for our small rural churches. An example or two will speak more eloquently than anything else. In 1863 the village of Cerne Abbas had a population of 1,400; now it has a population of 800. We have a historic church, dating from 1662, in Beaminster, once one of the most progressive towns in the West. In 1871 the population was 2,500, in 1881 it was 2,000, and the exodus continues. These cases are only specimens of what is going on all over Dorset. What it means—how hard it makes every kind of work, how it impoverishes the people who remain and robs of hope and energy—can only be realised by actual experience. All honour to the ministers, many of them highly educated, who toil on in these remote and forgotten corners of the great vineyard, "despised by the parson, damned by the squire, and half-starved by the congregations."

The mention of the squire and the parson introduces us to another of the great difficulties which cripple and hinder our smaller churches in Dorset, as the following facts will abundantly prove. Some months ago the writer had to attend a recognition service at the pretty village of P——. It was his first visit, and two things attracted his notice—the situation of the chapel and school, which are quite out of the village; and the fact that no placard announcing the service was found exposed in the village. The explanation of both facts was the same—viz., the opposition of the squire. His refusal to sell a site drove the friends to erect their present chapel in an incon-

venient situation; and his well-known hatred of Dissent, which makes him insert a clause in his leases prohibiting his tenants from holding any service, or even so much as a prayer-meeting, in their houses, makes them afraid to exhibit any placard having reference to services in the chapel or to openly attend such services. At Cripplestyle, in the extreme east of the county, the friends have long been anxious to substitute new and convenient premises for old and inconvenient ones, which have been altered and enlarged as the cause has grown until any further alteration would be positively dangerous. For this purpose they have desired to purchase the freehold of the site, which is now held on a lease for lives; and for many years they have been trying to induce the Marquis of Salisbury, who is the ground landlord, to sell them the freehold, but in vain. The sword of Damocles is kept hanging over their heads, and as soon as the brittle thread of the one remaining life is snapped, they may find themselves without a sanctuary or the possibility of building one, and the good work of half-a-century at an end. The unwillingness of the Marquis to sell is all the more remarkable as he was personally very friendly to the late minister, the Rev. Samuel Williams, and some seven or eight years ago spent between £200 and £300 in improving his house, for which he made no charge, and when he died three years ago continued the free use of the house to his widow for her life. At S——, in the north of the county, the church has been terribly crippled by the action of the noble owner of the whole town. Formerly a considerable proportion of the tradesmen were Dissenters, but their number has, of late years, been greatly reduced. For, while those who remained have not been interfered with, wherever there has been a change through removal or death and a shop or house has been to let, the first question about a would-be tenant has been, "Is he a Dissenter or a Liberal?" and no Dissenter's application has been entertained. Even where there has been no other applicant, it has been thought better to keep the property empty rather than admit a Dissenter. At Hawkchurch, a village in the west of the county, where occasional services had been held in a cottage for more than half-a-century, and where there seemed to be an opening for a larger work, a few gentlemen decided to build a little chapel. For this purpose they bought a small plot of freehold land. They had, however, no sooner paid for it, than the rector claimed it as being part of his glebe. It was the only land that could be had for the purpose, for the whole village, being built on the glebe, belonged to the rector in right of his rectory, and he was among the highest of High Churchmen. After a long and expensive lawsuit, resulting in trials at two successive assizes, the promoters succeeded in establishing their right to enough land for a site; and, undaunted by the trouble and expense to which they had been put, immediately proceeded to build the present neat chapel, which has more than justified their expectations, being filled every Sunday with attentive congregations, and is the

(*Continued on page* 109.)

DON'T FRET.

G. F. Root.

1. Has a neigh-bour in-jured you? Don't fret, don't fret, Do you feel that you are wronged? Don't fret, don't fret, You will sure-ly come off best, He's the most to an-swer for, Nev-er mind it, let it rest, Nev-er mind it, let it rest. Don't fret, don't fret, don't fret, don't fret, Don't fret!

2. Has a false re-port been made? Don't fret, don't fret, Do you know it all un-true? Don't fret, don't fret, It will run it-self to death If you let it quite a-lone, It will die for want of breath, It will die for want of breath. Don't fret, don't fret, don't fret, don't fret, Don't fret!

3. Are your e-ne-mies at work? Don't fret, don't fret, Do you fear they will suc-ceed? Don't fret, don't fret, They can harm you not a whit; If they find you heed them not, They will soon be glad to quit, They will soon be glad to quit. Don't fret, don't fret, don't fret, don't fret, Don't fret!

4. Is ad-ver-si-ty your lot? Don't fret, don't fret, Do mis-for-tunes come a-pace? Don't fret, don't fret, For-tune's wheel keeps turn-ing round, Ev-'ry spoke will reach the top, Which, like you, is go-ing down, Which, like you, is go-ing down. Don't fret, don't fret, don't fret, don't fret, Don't fret!

To our Readers—*Articles from the pens of the Revs. T. Brierley, B.A., H. Elvet Lewis, R. Tuck, B.A., and others, stand over till our next issue.*

(*Continued from page* 107.)

centre of a most encouraging work. At B——, in the south of the county, the minister desired to extend his work into some of the neighbouring hamlets. For this purpose he made arrangements in one place for a prayer-meeting in a cottage, and, in another, rented an empty cottage. The meetings, however, soon came to an end. In the former case, the tenant received notice to quit, with a private intimation that the notice might be disregarded if the meetings ceased; and, in the latter, the parson went to the owner and offered a higher rent, alleging that he desired to carry on religious work there; but in the course of a few weeks, when the Dissenters had been dished, the place was vacant once more. In nearly every rural parish the whole of the day-schools and the charities are in the hands of the clergy, who, in not a few instances (though not in all), so use them as to force or to bribe the people, young and old, to forsake the chapel.

These are real, and not merely sentimental difficulties, the pressure of which is continuous and unremitting. And the fact that these churches have not succumbed to them, but hold on their patient way, teaching, praying, and preaching, speaks well for their capacity of at least passive resistance. These difficulties have no doubt kept down the numerical strength of the Denomination, but they have made those who have resisted them stauncher and truer to their Free Church principles than they might otherwise have been.

It will be an unspeakable loss, not only to Congregationalism, but to that Religious Life and Freedom in England to which it so effectually ministers, if churches, such as these, which are (as we have shown), while fighting against terrible odds, doing so much for their own localities, and which are sending forth an annual contingent to swell the forces of our larger churches—are ever left to bear the whole weight of their adverse circumstances unaided—left, in other words, to be swept away by poverty and opposition. They have now for many years been assisted in their struggle with poverty out of funds, part of which have been locally raised, and the rest contributed by the Home Missionary Society or its successor, the Church-Aid Society. There is no danger that the local contributions will not be forthcoming. The self-sustaining churches of Dorset have too deep an interest in the work of their weaker and less favoured sisters to relax their efforts. The history of what they have done in the past leads us to expect that they will do more rather than less in the future. As far back as the year 1795, an Association, apparently of ministers only, was formed. In a few years (for the records are defective), certainly by 1818, this Association had developed into the "Dorset Missionary and Itinerant Society." Difficulties threatening the extinction of this Society, it was reorganised on a wider basis in 1823, and now became "The Dorset Association of Independent Ministers and Churches," which form it has retained, with some slight modifications, to the present time.

Its first efforts seem to have been very feeble. The late much honoured Rev. T. Durant, of Poole, was its first secretary, and sums amounting altogether to £15 were voted at the first meeting. In 1840, when Mr. Durant resigned his office, grants were voted to thirteen places, amounting in all to £57. Ten years later, in 1850, when the Rev. E. R. Conder (now of Leeds), was Secretary, £64 was granted. In 1860, £120 was granted to ten places; and in 1870, the amount had risen to upwards of £200, granted to fourteen places. The income from purely local sources has now risen to nearly £300. These figures, though a little dry, will serve to show that the churches of Dorset have been long and increasingly anxious to do their best to overtake the spiritual needs of their own county. The resources of Congregationalism within the county are, however, quite inadequate to meet the requirements of the case. The self-sustaining churches are ready, and more than ready, eager to do their best, but their best is not enough. If the smaller churches are not to be so crippled that many of them will lose all heart and eventually disappear, it is absolutely essential that something like £300 a year should be received from the Church-Aid Society. Will those whom God has placed in more fortunate circumstances, sympathise with the struggling, and so prize the welfare of rural England, as to listen to the cry which comes from Dorset, "Come over and help us"?

GOD PARDONS LIKE HIMSELF.

O, how a father pities
His dear though wayward son,
And showers deeds of kindness
Upon the erring one!
So with a father's pity
The Lord doth pity me;
And in my ears He whispers,
"My heart is full of thee."

Then as a mother comforts
The sighing, sobbing heart,
And soothes it in its troubles
Till sad despair depart,
My God consoles His children
And saith in accents mild,
"I care for every sinner
As for an only child."

Yea, as a father pities,
And as a mother cares;
But there the strongest language
Its *all* of Him declares:
Yet Faith knows something better,
And worth all worldly pelf,
For God like neither pardons,—
He pardons like Himself.

He buries in His pardon
Remembrance of the blame,
And from the heart He kisses
Away all sense of shame.
Divinely great such blessing,
Great like His wondrous love:
It is the pilgrim's passport
To realms of bliss above.

Ferndale. J. OWEN JONES.

THERE'S a wideness in God's mercy
Like the wideness of the sea;
There's a kindness in His justice,
Which is more than liberty.
For the love of God is broader
Than the measure of man's mind;
And the heart of the Eternal
Is most wonderfully kind.

F. W. FABER.

WINGS WANTED, BUT NOT NEEDED;

Or, Thoughts for the Times.

IT is worth while noting that he who expressed the wish to have "wings like a dove," for then he could "fly away and be at rest" [Ps. lv. 6], was a king, a king in a country and in an age when kings did pretty much as they liked, and had very little restraint to fear. One thinks that, if anybody under heaven could have got on very well without wings, it would be a king, and such a king as David, whose will was royal, and whose word was law. And yet this is the man who wants wings that he may get away from the fret and trouble of the hour!

We are all of us very much inclined to believe that if our lines had fallen into So-and-so's surroundings we should have found them "pleasant places," and if Such-an-one's quarters in life had been doled out to us we should have had a goodly heritage. All this is utterly misleading. Place, lot, position in life have very, very little to do with the question of rest or unrest, of satisfaction or discontent. Whatever our circumstances, however great our straits, we should not mend matters by exchanging with our neighbours; no, not if our neighbour lived in a palace and wore a crown. True, we might get rid of certain trials peculiar to our present lot, though that would not be by any means an unmixed good; but in that case we must accept the troubles peculiar to our altered circumstances, and we should find that these would sit on our shoulders just as heavily, and give us the heart-ache just as much. Of all the barren and baseless vagaries of a discontented mind, that of envying the lot of other people is surely the weakest and the worst Let those who are poor, and whose lot is one of toil and struggle, remember that it was a *king* that wanted a pair of wings, though he dwelt in a palace, and possessed great treasures of gold.

There is no doubt that, when David sighed out this weary wish to the winds, things were very bad with him. The rebellion of Absalom was coming to a head; the disaffection of the people was rising like a tide; and certain counsellors of David were playing him false. Things were very hard with him, very hard indeed. We will not stop to inquire how much of this trouble he had brought upon himself, but it is well to remember that wings would not be half so much wanted if our work was twice as worthy and our will was twice as much watched. It is a question whether David had done his duty by Absalom. Surely no king should so govern that his people should grow incurably disaffected. Doubtless he might have saved himself beforehand from at least a portion of his sorrows. There is not much comfort in that for some of us, is there? The wrong thing has been done, the mistaken step has been taken, and it is but cold comfort to say that we have brought it on ourselves. Very true, but it may have three good results,

nevertheless. It may lead us to grumble less, to murmur less, to repine less; and not to impute to Providence the troubles for which we have only ourselves to blame. It may lead us by the grace of God to live and act so that we will make no more yesterdays with dynamite concealed to be exploded at a due clock-work crisis into some sad and sorrowful to-day. It may lead the young to remember this: that their course lies fairly before them, unbanned and untarnished by yesterday's misdeeds, and that clean hands, a good conscience, a pure heart, and a manly reverence for truth and right begets a Divine content, in which wings are never wanted till they come. Then, they are not doves, but angel's wings, and the migration is from earth to heaven! "He that breaketh a hedge, a serpent shall bite him." Then there must be wound, and fang, and poison, and pain, and death! How can that sad succession be avoided? How? *Don't break the hedge!*

And now that the Psalmist has expressed his desire for wings, one wants to know where he wants to fly to. "Lo, then would I wander afar off and remain in the wilderness." By the wilderness he means solitude. He wants to get to a quiet place where he will not be disturbed with the noise of strife, the war of tongues, and the general moil and toil of human life. He is inclined to say:—

> "O for a lodge in some vast wilderness,
> Some boundless contiguity of shade
> Where rumour of oppression and deceit
> Might never reach me more!"

This also is a state of feeling with which many of us are not unfamiliar. I plead guilty to a passionate love of nature, and for the solitude necessary to commune with her; and if there is one thing above another that I always feel inclined to flee from it is the weary tramp and dreary rattle and Babel din of your city streets. Worn and grieved, disappointed, betrayed, and vexed, we have said in our hearts, "Oh, to wander away into the wilderness! to be quiet! to dwell alone! What a comfort it would be!" So David thought, and we in this day feel to need it even more than he did. There never was a period in the world's history, or a place on the world's wide surface, in which the course of life ran with such a rushing, churning, eddying, restless current as it runs with here and now.

Not only is there the high pressure of competition in commerce, trade, and labour, which makes bread hard to earn, and a manly independence difficult to maintain; not only is the life-struggle intensified and embittered by the reckless selfishness and dishonesty which beget a chronic strain on nerve and mind lest we should be trampled under in the race; but active and speculative minds are seeking to undermine our belief in that Providence who is the sheet-anchor of our strength and faith, and to blur with doubt and to blot with denial every star of hope that smiles on us from the murky sky.

One does not wonder that we are led to sympathise with David's plaint, "Oh, that I had wings like a dove!" No wonder that these

wise ones, these learned ones, these lights of the new philosophy, have come to ask themselves the question, "Is life worth living?" to which the answer need not be delayed or doubted. "No, sirs; in the light of the grim and ghastly Gospel of Matter, Chance, and Fate which you preach, certainly not; the game is not worth the candle, the end is not worth the means."

But that is a digression. David was not influenced by scepticism. He did not ask for death. This is not a prayer for an instant heaven; all he wants is to get out of the hurly-burly; out of the crowd; into the wilderness, quiet and alone.

There are two things David hoped to gain by going: two things that he thought to secure to himself if only his wings would grow. He "would escape from the windy storm and tempest," and he would "be at rest." But here David's logic is at fault. Does he mean to say that storm and tempest are confined to any particular location? The tempest that sweeps the city streets makes equal havoc on the village green, or in the country lane. There is often as much of fret and war, of treason, trouble, and tears "in my cottage near a wood," as in the shop or office or dwelling-house near the market or the exchange.

As for "Rest," that dove will descend, not only by the solitudes of Jordan, but on the hustled and hated martyr whose face shines like an angel's in the crowd. Rest does not necessarily go with solitude. Jonah away yonder on the mountain slope, or more solitary still, down in the deep, was not particularly comfortable. Nor was Cain when he wandered alone and cried to the winds, "My punishment is greater than I can bear." By the way, this very complainant, David, almost directly after, does go into solitude. There is no need for wings. He and his few faithful comrades are driven across the Kedron, and away he goes, far from the haunts of man; up and away among the mountains of Gilead, to which not the faintest echo of the world's loud noise can come. Let us see what he says before he goes there. "Trembling hath come on me; trouble hath overwhelmed me." Now, let us see what he says when he gets there. "From the end of the earth"—that is, his mountain solitude—"from the end of the earth will I cry to thee when my heart is overwhelmed." You see he uses the very self-same word in both places. He was "overwhelmed" when he was in the crowd before he fled away, and, after he had fled away and wandered afar off into the wilderness, he says his heart is "overwhelmed" still. The stormy wind and tempest that knocked him about so fearfully while he dwelt among the multitude, beat about him in his solitude just as fiercely and just as hard.

In another place he sings a plaintive song in the same wilderness, after he had had a taste of the solitude; and what says he there? Why, he is heart-sick and tearful because he is deprived of the advantages he used to have before he came there, and while yet he dwelt in the crowd. He positively envies, now, the sparrows that build in the temple eaves. When he was in the city he wanted the wings of a dove to leave it, and now that he has left it he wants

the wings of a swallow to fly back again. You see it is very wise, before we hanker for wings to fly away, to consider well all we are flying *from*, and not to put too much rose-colour on the picture of what we are flying *to*. If we forget this we are likely to miss sorely and sadly something we have parted from, and to get more than we bargained for, and less than we expected, where we go. A careful and thoughtful weighing of pros and cons will most likely lead us to the conclusion that it is wisest to stay where we are, and make the best of it.

> "O, solitude, where are the charms
> That sages have seen in thy face?
> Better dwell in the midst of alarms
> Than reign in this horrible place.
>
> Society, friendship, and love,
> Divinely bestowed upon man,
> O, had I the wings of a dove,
> How soon would I taste you again!"

You see David wanted wings to get to it, and Selkirk wanted the same wings to get away from it as fast as possible.

No, no; wings may be wanted, but they are not needed. The fact is that being at rest depends upon the *heart*, and not either on circumstances or place. Peace does not depend upon external conditions, but upon our state of mind. Paul had secured rest in a prison, and at the same time Nero was miserable in his palace. Our first great business is to get the heart made right with God. His favour is a perfect compensation for the world's disfavour; and the Divine calm of His brooding spirit, His conscious love and indwelling presence, are far more than a match for all the ills and frettings of our changeful life. The next great business for every one of us is to be thoroughly loyal and manly in the doing of the duty that lies next us. "Duty doing" and "duty done" are two magicians whose wizard wands have a wondrous power. They can induce a song in the most trying circumstances, and can reveal a patch of blue in the darkest sky.

When David was overwhelmed in his solitude he uttered a prayer that had a great deal more sense in it than all this nonsense about the "wings of a dove." "Lead me," says he, "to the Rock that is higher than I." He can go there on his feet, and, what is better still, that Rock will come to him and follow him, for that Rock is Christ—an unfailing shadow, a perfect shelter, a sure refuge, with an exhaustless fountain of strength and refreshment, of mercy and grace. We can offer that prayer. We can shelter from the stormy wind and tempest under that Rock. We can rest under that shadow. We can gain perpetual strength and stimulus from that ever-flowing stream!

Many people have given to these words a meaning that they were never intended to bear. They quote them as if David wanted the wings of a dove to fly to the rest of heaven: as if he was tired of life, and sought the quiet of the grave. But that was by no means the case. That is a frame of mind not healthy in any

Christian. Heaven? Where is it? In what does it consist? It consists in the perfect will of God, joyfully done. It dwells, and may be fully developed, in every humble and contented heart; for, "With Him will I dwell, and in Him is my delight," saith the Lord. Our heaven depends not on *where* we are, but on *what* we are. Jesus Christ came not only to open heaven *for* us, but to open up a heaven *in* us. Let us covet that, pray for that, strive and believe for that; then it will matter nothing whether we dwell in the streets of Jerusalem or the mountains of Gilead; whether we live in the busy world or the lonely wilderness. We shall "dwell in heavenly places in Christ Jesus," and in due time "We shall, on angels' wings upborne, to heaven ascend!"

J. JACKSON WRAY.

ROSE EASTON.

By M. A. PAULL, Author of "Whatsoever," "Tim's Troubles," "Friar Hildebrand's Cross," &c., &c.

CHAPTER IV.—"GOOD-BYE, MAMMA."

IT was one of those mysterious cases that baffle explanation. Poor little Tottles had had a very dismal time ever since the departure of her father and mother. She was of a very shy and yet very passionate nature. She resented the authority of the nurse who had been engaged to take care of baby during her parents' absence, and insisted that she needn't obey her. Susan she had never been taught to obey, and she therefore tried to find amusements for herself. When the nurse had insisted on a great many things, and Tottles had persistently refused obedience all through the first day of their absence, the woman, who had very little patience or tact with children, treated her with cold indifference as if she had been thirteen instead of three years of age, and Susan increased the unhappiness by constantly repeating Alice's words, and affirming, with various adjuncts to her asseverations, that Tottles would be sure not to have any present; to which she at length added, with equal assurance, the information that she would be well and deservedly punished for her naughtiness, that she would.

Alternating with all this, if Susan and the nurse were in the least at variance, the girl would turn caressingly to poor little Tottles and treat her with the most foolish indulgence. It was no wonder that the child suffered grievously. Through the long anxious hours of that night, during which Rose Easton acted the mother's part to the poor little sufferer, she blamed herself that she had not received Tottles into her own family during the absence of Peter and Alice Gromer. Would it not have been just a natural and simple act of kindness? It was too late now, however, and all she could do was to watch beside the little sleeper, to soothe her when she awoke and

tossed restlessly; to lift her in her arms when there were paroxysms of pain, and carry her about, softly singing the simple lullabies that her sweet voice made so musical and tender. There was no improvement in the child's condition. Just in the earliest dawn she grew more tranquil, but so pallid that Rose became apprehensive and sent Susan for the doctor. Tottles was lying on her lap, her dear little face drawn with suffering, her form slightly convulsed, when her eyes opened and looked at Rose Easton intently.

"What is it, my darling?" asked Rose, her own eyes moist with tears.

"Tottles naughty," said the little girl in a feeble voice; "Tottles mustn't have any."

"My darling little Tottles, you are sorry, it is all forgiven," said Rose Easton, her tears flowing fast at these sad words; "you shall have beautiful things by-and-bye."

Beautiful things! yes, Rose, more beautiful than even a mother's love can picture or desire for her little ones.

A wan smile crept over the innocent face, so that Rose thought she had heard and understood, yet could not surely tell.

The smile brightened. Did little Tottles see some of the beautiful things? "Good-bye, papa; good-bye, mamma!" she said aloud, as if she were calling after them, when they left her; and then she sighed heavily, gave one little struggle in the arms of her loving friend, and all was still.

The doctor came, and found Rose, after her anxiety and watching, crying bitterly for the parents whose home was darkened, and for the failure of her own care to soften this blow. He was a kind-hearted man and appreciated her feelings.

"It will be an unspeakable comfort to them," he said, "to feel that you were with the poor little girl. Everything has been done that could be done to save her, since she was in your hands; you must rest assured how faithfully you have performed a mother's part to her."

But Rose Easton, though she thanked him, only wished the more earnestly that she had taken the whole care of the child during Alice's absence. It seemed to come before her in the light of a neglected duty. She sent for her husband, directly she could do so, without awakening him very unseasonably, and found an unspeakable comfort in his presence. They arranged that Paul Easton should meet the bereaved parents at the station, and that Rose should remain at their house, and have all arranged there for their comfort, as far as possible. It was a beautiful, bright autumn morning, though the air was keen; and Alice, on their journey, was very hopeful, and would not indulge in any of the dismal apprehensions concerning their child that clouded Peter Gromer's much deeper, more sympathetic nature. Alice talked to some of their travelling companions in quite a lively strain; but her husband took refuge from conversation, as far as possible, in the pages of the London paper, though he found himself thinking rather than reading most of the way. This illness of little Tottles was the first

great sorrow he had known that had come close to him, and stood up facing him, as a thing to be met and by no possibility avoided. Life had gone smoothly with him until now; his worst anxiety had been in regard to money matters, and that was of a wholly different character to this fear for his child. It had appeared a great trouble when there was no greater; now it felt small, indeed, by comparison. Out of his grief was growing the manly resolve to avoid the other anxiety altogether, by determining, cost them what it might of sacrifice, to live strictly within their income in the future, and to pay every debt incurred in the past.

Sorrow is not all darkness; to every true nature it has a radiance in which life and its duties stand out more clearly than before.

"Saxerby! Saxerby!" called the stationmaster, and the porter, and the guard; and there, on the platform, walking up and down, anxiously looking into the carriages, was Paul Easton, his kind face very grave.

"She is worse, Alice! Poor little Tottles;" whispered Peter Gromer to his wife, with a choking feeling in his throat.

"Paul Easton of course reflects Rose," said Alice, persistently refusing to be anxious. They beckoned to him, and he drew near, and helped them take out their bags, and aided Alice to alight from the carriage.

"I have a cab waiting for you," he said quietly, in his kindest manner.

"How is she?" asked Alice. Peter Gromer could not speak.

"Rose will tell you all; we had best get home," said Paul Easton.

"You can tell me how she is, Mr. Easton," said Alice, almost sharply; she disliked what she thought his absurd deference to his wife's opinion, as if nobody else could say how the child was but Rose. Paul Easton did not speak, even then.

Peter Gromer leaned towards him as they sat in the cab, and grasped his friend's hand.

"She is dead?" he questioned, his face pale, even to the lips.

Paul Easton held the hand of the bereaved father tightly. "You must try to be calm, Peter," he said gently, "for Alice's sake."

"Dead!" echoed Alice; "dead, oh! I do think there must have been some strange neglect. Children are generally able to get over little ailments. Oh! I think you must be mistaken, Mr. Easton; perhaps they feared she *would* die." Thus she shuffled off the terrible truth, and would not entertain it as a reality, until she was obliged. Her words, "some strange neglect," smote upon her husband's ear; but he applied them quite differently to the sense in which she had uttered them. And, just as Paul Easton thought it best to tell Alice the truth by saying, "She died at six o'clock this morning," Peter Gromer said sadly:

"Some strange neglect! you are very right, Alice, and it has been on our part. We should have taken better care of her, our little darling; God help us to be better parents, my dear."

Then no more words were said till they arrived at the house, and

the blinds pulled down in all the windows, and the solemn quietude that prevailed, smote upon Alice's heart, and convinced her that death, indeed, reigned within her home. Rose was in the little hall and caught the bereaved young mother in her arms, and soothed her with tender caresses, and led her into the small parlour, and coaxed her to take some of the coffee that was ready for them.

How fair Rose had made the chamber of death! Dear little Tottles lay so sweetly, so calmly, so peacefully, in her snow-white garments, a golden lily in her small waxen hand, a smile on her little lips, reflection perchance of the joy with which her ransomed spirit met its Saviour. Having taken Peter and Alice thither, Rose left them alone and returned to her husband, and Paul told her of Alice's strange words about neglect, and of Peter Gromer's reply. Rose immediately made excuses for her.

"You must forgive anything a mother says in such a case, Paul," she said; "I daresay I should have felt and spoken just the same."

"But, my love," said Paul Easton, "that would be quite another matter; for you never did neglect your children, never."

"Please don't praise me," said Rose; "I feel I ought to have taken care of Tottles also."

Paul Easton could not echo this lament, but he did not love Rose less for her generous instinct and impulse. It was quite a long time before Alice appeared, and then she came alone and appealed to Paul Easton,

"I am frightened about Peter," she said. "He will not be consoled. He will make himself ill. Do go to him, Mr. Easton. Oh, I wish I had not gone to London! Not that I think I did wrongly, but because Peter seems as if he could not forgive it. He doesn't blame me, but himself for allowing it. And yet, you know, if I had been at home, the darling child might have died exactly the same."

Rose heartily wished she could have said she thought so, but she was too truthful. What Tottles would have naturally told her mother, she had been too shy to tell the nurse, who had frightened the little child by her anger from the first.

"Do go to Peter, Mr. Easton," entreated Alice, and Paul went. He found the unhappy father pacing restlessly up and down the chamber, as was his habit when anything excited him.

"Sacrificed to vanity! Sacrificed to vanity!" he repeated, as he walked. Paul Easton sat down quietly in a chair. He did not think he could do any good by interrupting him. For some time Peter Gromer did not appear to notice his presence. At last, wearied apparently with the strength of his emotions, he sank down upon the end of a small couch that stood in the room, and, leaning his head upon his arm, burst into a passion of grief. Then, very gently, very sympathisingly, Paul Easton approached his friend. He did not weary him with platitudes. He did not tell him that sorrow was the common heritage of man and must therefore be borne patiently; but he spoke of the joy his child had entered into and of the sympathy of Christ. He did not ask him the meaning

of the words he had used, for he supposed that to the father's heart it did now appear that it was the promptings of vanity rather than the earnest desire for improvement, that had led his wife and himself to pay their visit to the Metropolis.

Then Paul Easton, in his turn, confided in his friend. He told him of the revelation that had so recently come to him of his own selfishness, and the determination he had made to forego what he had once regarded as allowable luxuries for the sake of doing his duty to Rose and his children.

"What you do for the sake of adding to home comforts," said Peter Gromer, roused by this talk, "I see I ought to do in order to pay my debts and as a means of future economy. I have been restless here at Saxerby. I have imagined myself too good for the place, and poor Alice, in her pride in me, thought the same. Now, Paul, standing here, beside that empty home of my little darling's soul, the voice of truth tells me that, on the contrary, I am not good enough. I have wasted opportunities of usefulness. I have prided myself on my grand sermons, instead of asking myself how my life and my words were influencing my church."

"We will uphold each other, then," said Paul Easton, "and in laying aside the use of all intoxicating stimulants, we may experience, as so many of our brethren say they have done, that we have a new influence for good with our flocks."

It was later in the day when, after some hours necessarily spent at home, that Paul and Rose Easton returned to Peter and Alice, who were very dependent upon them in their grief. And then every little event connected with their darling child was recounted to them, and they heard of that last touching "Good-bye," which would never be forgotten by either of them. The "God be with you," of which our "Good-bye" is said to be composed, Peter Gromer loved to believe had already begun to be realised in the lives of himself and his Alice. As the days went on, after they had laid their firstborn to rest, in "sure and certain hope" of the better life beyond, he observed how much more patient and unwearied Alice was in regard to her baby boy; how differently she spoke of Rose Easton; how willing she was to accept hints for baby's management from her more experienced friend; above all, how heartily she agreed with him as to the duty of paying their debts, though it involved a sacrifice that Alice dreaded much more than going without ale and wine herself. She must refuse to offer it to others, even her fashionable friends, whom she had hitherto so much prized.

"I don't believe, Peter, Mrs. Thompson will ever call upon me a second time, after she finds I no longer offer her a glass of wine."

Peter was kind, and yet ventured to suggest that his Alice was by no means dependent on Mrs. Thompson for either society or comfort. But one thing the young wife could not agree to give up, as her husband wished her to do, and that was the idea of his finding a church in London.

(*To be continued.*)

THE TEACHERS' PAGE.

INTERNATIONAL LESSONS FOR MAY.

LAST month we followed Paul's journey to Rome as a prisoner who had appealed to be tried at Cæsar's court. We left him lodging in his own hired house, in charge of a soldier belonging to the Prætorian guard. Apparently he was free to receive visitors, but not free to leave his lodgings; and this month we are to see how he spent the leisure waiting time, until new documents could be obtained from Cæsarea, to replace those lost in the shipwreck, and until his turn came in the cause list at the Imperial Court.

He was deeply interested in all the churches he had founded, and, through the visits of various friends and disciples, he gained news respecting them. He had no hope of ever visiting them again, so he wrote them letters, and these prove to have such wide and general interest that they have been preserved to our time. There are some things in them which are difficult for us to understand, simply because we do not know exactly to what Paul refers; and we read the epistles much more intelligently if we know something about the churches to which they were sent, and the circumstances which led to their being written. Paul's associations with Ephesus, Philippi, and the young man Timothy, were close, long-continued, and deeply interesting.

Lessons taken from epistles, and other purely didactic portions of Scripture, test a teacher's skill in teaching. It is easy work to interest children, and impress truth, from scriptures of narrative or incident; but passages from epistles introduce a variety of subjects, and these often of doctrinal character, without relief of incident or illustration. Teachers will find it best to fix upon *one subject*, in connection with each of the lessons of this month, and then make the passage yield suggestions for the illustration and enforcement of that subject. A mere exposition of the successive sentences will be wearisome to both teacher and scholars.

In these brief notes there can only be given some indication of the way in which the teaching of the previous months may be carried on. We have been learning much from Paul's *character*, especially as sides and aspects of character come out to view under circumstances of disability, suffering, and calamity. Now we study his writings, and we are to see *whether his teachings and his character really harmonise.* Of some it can only be said, "we may follow what they *say*, but not what they *do*." But here is a man so true and so sincere that we accept both his sayings and his doings. And in this he was a noble follower of Christ.

This being our general idea of the month's lessons, we shall find very specific subjects for our consideration.

First subject.—The root and principle of Christian character. That is, *obedience* (Eph. vi. 1—13). Paul was so loyal and so obedient to Christ, as to be an example of what he commends. In this passage he lays down the true basis of Christian socialism, by showing how each class has duties towards the others.

Second subject.—The model of Christian character. This is none other than *Christ* Himself (Phil. ii. 5—16), and the most striking thing in Him was the *meekness* with which He could give up His own things in order to help and bless others.

Third subject.—The tone of Christian character. This should be *contentment* (Phil. iv. 4—13), which is submission, with cheerfulness and activity making it easy and beautiful.

Fourth subject.—The passion of a Christian man. This should be to *preach Christ*, who can save sinners (1 Tim. i. 15—17; ii. 1—6). Paul's glorying was that he had "known nothing among men save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified."

Fifth subject.—The calmness of a Christian man; seen in his *enduring* so much for Christ's sake (2 Tim. iii. 14—17; iv. 1—8).

All the lessons may be brightened if we keep our eye on Paul, get illustrations from his life, and from his Master's; and make it our aim to show how life is glorified, if, like Paul, we set our love on Christ, and give ourselves to the service of others, for Christ's sake.

ROBERT TUCK.

"MR. GLADSTONE'S ROOM" AT HAWARDEN.

"MR. GLADSTONE'S ROOM."

THE Rev. Dr. Thomas, in his admirable address last month from the chair of the Congregational Union, said that whilst Wales could not boast of its statesmen, yet that the leading statesman of Europe resides in it. He added that, as Mr. Gladstone had married a Welsh lady, Welshmen felt they had some share in him, though they could not fairly claim him as a fellow-countryman.

It has been truly said, in "Our Own Country," that if counties were esteemed according to their size, Flintshire would not hold a high place in public regard, for it is not the twentieth part of Yorkshire, and it is nearly the smallest county in the British Islands, though the most densely populated county in Wales. Its associations redeem it from obscurity, and stretch far back into the historic past. English Parliaments met in it, three centuries ago, and its men defied and defeated English kings. Its ruined castles and churches are evidence of its ancient history, and its charming scenery inspired one of our greatest lyric poets.

Among the chief sources of attraction to the tourist in Flintshire is Hawarden Castle, the seat of the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone. We know of few spots where a more pleasant day can be spent than gazing on scenes connected with the home life of one of England's noblest sons.

There are two castles—the old and the new. The former is a ruin, and the latter a modern structure in which Mr. Gladstone resides. On another page we have pleasure in giving a picture, from a photograph, of what is known as "Mr. Gladstone's Room." It has been described as not twenty feet square, crowded with books, papers, furniture, busts, china, medallions, and other articles indicative of culture and taste. At the simple table in this room, which is called "the political table," many of the schemes have been evolved and the passages penned which have carried the name of Gladstone throughout Europe and far beyond.

Yet we doubt if ever

A NOBLER USE

was made of this room than on the occasion referred to in the following story:—In Mr. Gladstone's household was an old woman-servant who had a son inclined to go wrong. The mother remonstrated and advised her boy, but all to no purpose. He seemed determined on a headlong course to ruin. At last, the mother, in her desperation, caught the idea that if she could persuade the Premier to take him in hand, perhaps the prodigal might be reclaimed. Screwing up her courage, she approached her master, and, in trembling tones, preferred her request. Mr. Gladstone responded at once, and had the lad brought into his study, when he spoke tender words of remonstrance and advice, and, eventually, knelt down and prayed God to help him in the work of reformation. This kindly act was effectual, and the lad was saved.

THE PARISH CHURCH AT HAWARDEN

is worthy of a visit. We notice from an extract in the (Chicago) *Advance* (a most admirable paper), that Dr. Boardman, of New York, when recently visiting this village, was chiefly interested in the church "where the great statesman worships." Whenever Mr. Gladstone is at Hawarden Castle, he walks every morning in the week to the little church, where at eight o'clock there is held a daily service. Often on a Sunday he reads one of the lessons for the day. A gentleman who worshipped in this church last year says it "was filled with an eager and expectant congregation, but, as the Premier did not read the lessons, there was a look of disappointment in several quarters. The service was choral, and he joined heartily in the responses. By-and-by, the good old hymn,

"'O God, our help in ages past,'

was sung. It was then that he was seen at his best, for he seemed to put all his soul into the singing of that hymn, waving his body to and fro—his very attitude making one believe that he could vie with any Methodist in the world in earnestness and devotion in spiritual exercises."

THE CHURCH NOTICES

in the porch evidently interested Dr. Boardman, for we see that he transcribed them as containing "a hint" for American worshippers. We quote them as giving hints no less useful on this side of the Atlantic, though we have no love for the doctrine of "holy places."

ON YOUR WAY TO CHURCH.

On your way to the Lord's House be thoughtful, be silent, or say but little, and that little good. Speak not of other men's faults; think of your own, for you are going to ask forgiveness. Never stay outside; go in at once; time spent inside should be precious.

IN CHURCH.

Kneel down very humbly and pray. Spend the time that remains in prayer; remember the awful presence into which you have come. Do not look about to see who are coming in, nor for any other cause. It matters nothing to you what others are doing; attend to yourself. Fasten your thoughts firmly on the holy service. Do not miss one word; this needs a severe struggle; you have no time for vain thoughts. The blessed Spirit will strengthen you if you persevere.

AFTER CHURCH.

Remain kneeling and pray. Be intent; speak to no one till you are outside. The church is God's House, even when prayer is over. Be quiet and thoughtful as you go through the churchyard.

ON YOUR WAY HOME.

Be careful of your talk, or the world will soon slip back into your heart. Remember where you have been, and what you have done. Resolve and try to live a better life.

In ending this brief notice of Hawarden, we take the opportunity of commending to our readers an excellent collection of "Anecdotes" of Mr. Gladstone, which they can get for six stamps from Mr. Jacob Rees, Printer, Mold. From it we extract the following:—

THE PREMIER'S NAME CHOSEN FOR A SCOTCH BAIRN.

A Scotch weaver took his child to the minister for baptism. Upon being asked what he intended the name of the child to be, he said, "The *Right Honourable* William Ewart Gladstone." The minister replied, "Oh, William, that'll never dae. I can admit your bairn into the veesible kirk, but if you want the world's honours for it, I doot ye'll hae to gang to the Prime Minister himsel'."

Rhyl. D. BURFORD HOOKE.

WHO KILLED THE PRAYER MEETING?

1. THE PASTOR KILLED IT. Although he gave notice from the pulpit on Sunday that there would be "a prayer meeting" on Wednesday, he changed it into a lecture when the evening came. As a lecture it was a great success, as a prayer meeting it was a lamentable failure. After the learned man had taken twenty minutes himself, every one else felt that whatever he might say would seem very tame. Young John Evans wanted to say a word or two, telling how the Lord Jesus had satisfied his hunger, and then utter a short prayer of request for other hungry souls, but his poor little word was nowhere. Indeed, he didn't say it. Oh, the pauses of that meeting! Surely the clock in the corner never ticked so loudly. And the pastor killed it.

2. THE DEACON KILLED IT. It was the next week. This time the pastor went in with a warm heart. He opened the meeting with a short, tender prayer, and then, in a brief word, told, as a child might tell it, the preciousness of the Lord's presence. And it seemed as if nothing could prevent it from being a helpful, quickening season. Something did prevent it. The grand old deacon was a little tired and sleepy, but he thought he must do something to take up the time. He began away back in the sin of Eden, and did not stop until he reached the year 1885. And then he said, "Let us pray." Was that really "praying," that ten minutes' description of the plan of salvation which followed? Was this what that discouraged man over there in the corner wanted from the meeting? Alas, the deacon killed it all!

3. THE THOUGHTLESS MEMBER KILLED IT. She is at the meeting, although not always there. Next to her sits a friend who is out of Christ. The thoughtless member whispers during the pastor's prayer, giggles at every mistake and turns over the leaves of the hymn-book when any one talks. The people within a radius of ten feet each way are disturbed. The Spirit is grieved, and that,

too, by one who is professing to seek the glory of God. And that killed the prayer meeting.

4. THE OFFICIOUS MEMBER KILLED IT. One of the weaker brothers offered a prayer and made a mistake in it. Another brother misquoted a text. The pastor never corrected an error during a meeting. He thought the correction more fatal to the spirit of the meeting than the mistake. Not so with the officious brother. He rose and corrected each mistake, and that killed several meetings.

5. THE SIX MEMBERS WHO TOOK TEN MINUTES EACH KILLED IT. It was a fine symposium on the theme, "Christ the Bread of Life," but it was not a prayer meeting. It over-ran the hour, and the only prayer was the opening prayer.

6. THE FAULT-FINDING MEMBER KILLED ONE PRECIOUS MEETING. His prayer was a real lecture to God, reminding Him of the failings and wickedness of the church. When Christ said to His disciples, "Give ye them to eat," did He mean gall and wormwood, or the Bread of Life? Would not one earnest prayer at home before the meeting have brought as its answer a sweeter spirit?

How many ways there are of killing the prayer meeting? How many a Church has, this year, lost its Week of Prayer through thoughtless, indifferent, careless members? Do we have enough of praying? Do good people ever err by too brief prayers?

Dear reader, don't kill any more prayer meetings.

S. W. ADRIANCE.

PRAYING FOR BAPTIZED CHILDREN.

IT was a very gratifying on a recent Sunday to hear a Presbyterian minister pray for baptized children. Such a petition is so rarely heard in these days that it would almost seem as if faith in God's covenant with believers and their children had become extinct.

An instance of the efficacy of public prayer for this class of persons occurred in a small town not many years ago. It was the custom of the young pastor—a Congregationalist—to pray, in the course of the Sunday services, for children of the church. On one Sabbath, at a communion service, fervent supplication was offered for all such. A young lady present was so deeply moved that she at once made up her mind to give herself to Christ in answer to that prayer. She never faltered in her resolution, and when the next communion season came round she was a decided Christian.

If such petitions were more frequently heard in the church and in the home, would they not serve as safeguards and restraints for the thoughtless and the wandering, leading them eventually to consummate the consecration which their faithful parents made in their earlier years, as well as incline the tender lambs of the flock to come voluntarily and gladly into the fold of the Good Shepherd?

THE LIGHT THAT IS FELT.

A TENDER child of summers three,
Seeking her little bed at night,
Paused on the dark stair timidly.
"O mother! Take my hand," said she,
"And then the dark will all be light."

We older children grope our way
From dark behind to dark before;
And only when our hands we lay,
Dear Lord, in Thine, the night is day,
And there is darkness nevermore.

Reach downward to the sunless days
Wherein our guides are blind as we,
And faith is small and hope delays;
Take Thou the hands of prayer we raise,
And let us feel the light of Thee!

J. G. WHITTIER.

JAMES HERBERT'S DIARY;

Or, Experiences with Seekers after God.

By the Rev. ROBERT TUCK, B.A., Author of "Netley Independent Chapel," "Links Wanted," &c.

IV.—THE SENSE OF SIN.

CHRISTIAN ministers and teachers, who are really in earnest to win souls for Christ, find it most difficult to secure such convictions of sin as prepare for the distinct apprehension of Christ as a *Saviour*. Sometimes one is half tempted to inquire whether this educated, scientific, respectable age really wants a Saviour; and whether Christ, a reformer, a teacher, a thought-leader, and a life-guide, may not suffice for it. The name, Jesus—who shall save His people from their *sins*—is passing a little back into a second place; and Christ, or "the Christ," is now talked about, much as men talk about "the Buddha." We are losing sight of the redemptive side of our Lord's work, and consequently we are neglecting the preliminary and necessary duty of calling men to "repentance." Inquiring of many ministers we find they seldom notice any oppressive sense of sin in inquirers with whom they have to deal. Some indeed say that they have never met with a case; and that the idea seems now to prevail that, at a certain age, the young people of the families and the school will pass into the Church without any well-defined "experience" of anything.

Modern preaching does not make the conviction of sin a distinct aim. We have never heard a sermon that roused conscience and shook down into the dust our comfortable self-satisfaction. We have read such sermons. Visiting Oxford some time ago, and staying at the house of a bookseller, we borrowed a volume of Cardinal Newman's sermons, written before he passed into the Church of Rome; and never have we had such a soul-

searching and soul-humbling as in the careful reading of those sermons. Why cannot ministers preach like that, and make the congregation cry out, "Men and brethren, what must we do to be saved?" Have we lost those "terrors of the Lord" which gave Paul his persuasive power? Are we painting the future of godless sinners with such roseate tints that they find nothing to *fear*, in this life or in the next? In view of prevailing sentiments about the comfortableness of the everlasting time, even for sinners, what convicting forces are left to us, and how can we be efficient agents of the Holy Ghost in the convincement of sin? There is no graver question that can be put on the hearts of pastors and of teachers than this, for too many of us are wielding a sword *with the edge off;* and, even so, we have lost the skill of striking with it, unto the "dividing asunder," and discerning the "thoughts and intents of the heart."

Evidently for a long while this subject greatly distressed Herbert. Desiring to recognise all the various ways in which the Lord leads souls to Himself, he yet could not keep from feeling that the good, deep rootage of Christian life and Christian principle can only be made in the humbling sense of sin. What he thought about it, and what he did, comes out in the following passage from his diary:—

"I have been thinking much and long over the very feeble sense of sin which we observe now-a-day, and what that means in its relation to modern religious life. We so seldom find in professing Christians that humility of heart, and that close, watchful, obedient clinging to the Lord Jesus, which attend the feeling of being 'forgiven,' and 'delivered.' Our fathers made a demand for a very afflictive form of repentance, and were unwilling to recognise any exceptional cases. But we have made too intense a rebound, and are even more seriously erring on the other side; for our teachings and our personal relations with seekers seem to say there is no need for anything so serious, so searching, so humbling, as the conviction of sin. I fear very much of modern Christian life may be represented by the houses raised by speculative builders, whose foundations are scarcely a foot deep, and whose early good looks soon fade. Our Lord would say of so many of us, 'They have no root in themselves.'

"But here is the practical difficulty which I find. The young people who come to us for guidance and help have not committed crimes, or acts of open iniquity, and so the sense of *guilt*, in relation to acts, would not be true for them, if it could be awakened; and we must anxiously beware of making hypocrites by forcing experiences that are not really sincere.

"I am resolved that I will make this 'conviction of sin' a prominent matter the next time I have to deal with an earnest, seeking soul."

Further on in the diary is the following passage: "We have had a week of special services with the faithful ministry of my friend Sandford, who has set the Lord Jesus forth, and very persuasively pleaded for immediate acceptance of Him, and of the salvation He

offers. After one of the meetings, Emily W—— came into the vestry to see me. She is the younger daughter of one of my deacons, and is a bright-spirited, intelligent, healthy girl, who has been surrounded all her life long with religious associations, her mother more especially exerting a quiet and gracious influence by the sweetness of her character, her wise training, and her many prayers. Emily had been aroused to a personal concern, and had taken up the idea that she *ought* to feel herself a sinner, and she did not, and could not, in any sincere sense; so she came to me to ask how she was to get a feeling of her real need of a Saviour.

"I had never before ventured to treat a seeker as I treated her; but I knew her well, and knew of her disposition to contradict, and take the other side of every question. So, with an uplifting of heart for a blessing on my plan, I questioned her as to whether she had committed any crimes, or done any dreadfully wrong things, and quite agreed with her that she had *not* done this or that. I told her that if she had not done such things it was no use trying to make out that she had done them; and it was evident that she was not a sinner, and did not really want a Saviour.

"She looked at me very hard, and could not be quite sure whether I was speaking sincerely or satirically. She was going to begin arguing the matter when I stopped her and said, 'Come and see me next Monday, Emily, and then, may be, we shall get a little light.' I saw plainly that, in her case, the sense of sin must come by searching motives, not by observing acts; and that the first thing to do was to get attention taken off from the mere *acts*, and directed to serious heart-searching.

"As I had hoped, her anxiety was deepened by my agreeing with her, and there was the pathos of a very real earnestness in her voice, as she said, 'But I do want Christ, and there must be some sense in which I really need Him as a Saviour.'

"'So there is,' I replied, 'only you must have a better idea of sin than a mere committing of crimes or doing unlawful deeds. A young ruler once came to Jesus who could say that he had kept all the formal laws right from his youth up. Jesus soon shewed him that if he knew his conduct he did not know *himself*. That young man, so well satisfied with his doings, did not want Christ, the Saviour, any more than you do, Emily. But what did Jesus say to him? Virtually, what He said was this—"You mistake if you only try to read your *life*. Read your heart. Try your motives. You will find *self love* rules there, and *that* is the essence of sin. You do not either love God with all your heart, or your neighbour as yourself, for you cannot give up your best things either at God's call, or your fellow-creature's good. You come to me asking about 'eternal life,' only because you want to get something more for 'self.' Self! Self! *that* rules, that enslaves, that is sin, rebellion, debasement, the great wickedness. Forgiveness of the sin of living unto self is what you need. Salvation from the dominion of self Jesus brings.'

"'You don't mean that I am a selfish girl, do you,' Emily said, with a tear that told me I had spoken almost too intensely.

"'Not selfish in just the common everyday meaning of that word, Emily,' I replied, 'but self-centred, doing everything because you like to do it, and not because God bids you do it, and you must show your love to Him by obedience. It is quite true that you have not stolen, or lied, or sworn, or dishonoured your parents, or murdered; and, as I have said, you cannot need forgiveness of such things. But you have yet to learn the plague of your own heart, and the sin of the self-centred will. In His wonderful sermon on the Mount, the Lord Jesus taught His disciples that hateful thoughts were murder, and covetous desires were stealing. Read that sermon over very carefully and very prayerfully, and you will begin to see what you must be, in heart, thought, motive, in the sight of God.

"'Do you remember how Daniel tried to bring Belshazzar to a conviction of sin? He might have talked to him about his sinful indulgencies, and his open transgressions, but, instead, he goes to the very root of the matter, and shews him his bad, ungrateful, unloving heart, by pleading, "The God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified." Can a life-time of such sin go for nothing before God? searching your thoughts, your heart, is there nothing to be forgiven, nothing to be delivered from? Look at it in this way,—if you had been all these years towards your *earthly* father and mother as you have been towards your *Heavenly Father*, would it not be plain enough that you need both repentance and forgiveness?

"'Let me give now one brief sentence to pray every day; it is this, "Lord shew me *myself?*"'

"I had purposely rather talked to her than let her talk, for I felt that she would only get light through her own thinking, and that argument would rather tend to relieve impression.

"The subject was so much in my mind, that for some Sundays it gave character and point to the Sabbath discourses. Emily W—— did not immediately gain light and rest. I did not think she would. With the new idea of appraising herself, it was likely that some time would elapse before the heart-badness became oppressively revealed. We do not easily learn to know our own hearts, and even some stumblings may be needed ere the knowledge can become arresting and humbling. At last, one day, I had a little note from her, which ran as follows:—

"'My dear Pastor,

"'I have learnt at last that I want Jesus as a *Saviour*, and I have taken Him to forgive and save. A sad failure at last opened my eyes to see the bad self that is in me. Now I see His preciousness, and His fitness for me, even me. How I thank you for not letting me rest in mere good sentiment! To see myself a sinner has been to see the very best in Jesus; and now my whole desire is to live for Him, who has forgiven and saved even me.

"'Yours, with thankful love,

"'Emily W——'

"God helping me, henceforth, 'repentance' shall have its right place in all my preaching."

NEAR THE LORD'S TABLE.

No. III.—"FATHER, IF THOU BE WILLING."

IT was not the pain of dying in itself that made the soul of Jesus Christ beforehand so "exceeding sorrowful," but the pain of losing His Father's face. The valley of the shadow of death would have been to Him but the "garden of the Lord," if His God would only walk hand in hand through it with Him. Many tired feet have stumbled at the "dark mountains;" but to Him they would have been mountains of myrrh and of frankincense where He could sing the song of life "until the day break and the shadows flee away," were it not for the Great Forsaking. In the death of the cross the love of God for His Son would be clouded by the love of God for man; and in drawing near to the sinner the Father would hide His face from the Saviour. It was this hiding of the Divine face that made Christ shrink from the last agony.

"Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world." There can be no other love like the love between God and the Son; and therefore there can be no separation like the separation between Them on Calvary. When God loves a man it is a great love; when God forsakes a man it is a great forsaking. When God loves an angel it is a great love; when God forsakes an angel it is a great forsaking. But the love of loves, the love that outshines all other throughout eternity, is the love of God towards his Son; for "unto which of the angels said He at any time, Thou art My Son?" And so there can be no cry of despair from the abandoned spirits in the deepest hell like that cry of the dying Christ: "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

"I and My Father are one." This perfect oneness is as a sea of infinite clearness, whose waves cannot be seen of human eye, because they are too pure and radiant; whose luminous, tideless shores can never be reached by human thought, because they are lost in white, eternal glory. And the cry that rang along these soundless depths—the dying cry of the "strong Son of Man"—will travel through eternity without finding a resting place, until the restitution of all things.

This oneness of the Father and the Son had never before been broken. They had always been together; they had always thought together; they had always felt together. But the hour was come: and the Son held in his hand the cup of separation from the Father. It was almost more than even He could bear. And so He prayed that it may be taken away; and then prayed that his prayer should not be answered. The prayer that kneels at the door and is silent is great; but the greatest of all prayers is that which shuts the door in its own face, and goes out into the darkness trembling and trusting. "Nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt."

It is the healthiest and the fullest flower that is most in want of

the sun; and it is the greatest and the purest soul that feels the loss of God most keenly. The sinning tribes would go up to fight, careless whether they have God with them or not. It was Moses that would not make one step forward without the Lord who had spoken to him "face to face as a man speaketh unto his friend." "If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence." The soul that fights the best when God is present, becomes the weakest when God has left it. "God, and enough," but "without God, without anything." And of all the pure souls that ever breathed none had ever lived so near the Father as the Son; and none could therefore know the agony of losing the Father as He was to know it.

It was the reality of the personal life of Christ in God that made the separation between them the most painful of all partings. All the heart-broken farewells of the world are overshadowed by the farewell that broke the Saviour's heart on Calvary.

Hitherto Christ had known no reward but the favour of the Father. When a company of Pasteur's young disciples were leaving France to go away and study the cholera at its home in the East, they were asked what they expected for their devotedness and self-sacrifice? And one of them answered—"Only the master's commendation when we come back." But he never lived to come back: he fell a martyr to scientific heroism—for the master's sake! Christ found his heaven in the light of the Father's face. He lived on the smile of God. And He was to lose this—His life, His heaven, His all! "Father, if thou be willing"——

The Saviour's love "suffereth long and is kind.....beareth all things.....endureth all things.....never faileth;" but it was hard to lose God in loving man. That love had often been troubled in Galilee by the angry face of the Pharisee, and still more by the trustless face of the parting friend; but it had forgotten all its trouble on the mountain at night in one look of the Father's face. That love had stood on Olivet shedding bitter tears over lost Jerusalem—the city in whose streets it had been sore abused by the scorn of those who claimed to be the chosen children of God; and then, tired and sad, it had come to rest its head on the Father's bosom. That love had been turned away from the door on many a wild winter's night, and had travelled far with the driving sleet in its face; but it had come to kneel at the threshold, and the Father's hand had closed the weary eyelids. That love had looked in the eyes of the traitor, and shuddered; it had looked in the eyes of death, and wept; and then it had looked in the eyes of the Father, and smiled. But in the great forsaking on the cross, the Father's face, the Father's hand, the Father's bosom, would all be too far away. Christ already felt the painful, solemn twilight of the Hidden Face closing around Him. He must take his dolorous journey to Calvary with his eyes on the ground; and when in the last hour He should venture to lift them up to heaven, it would only be to find God out of sight. "Father, if Thou be willing"——

It was here that Christ for a moment trembled and hesitated—

trembled to lose the smile of God—hesitated as He came to the terrible break of His personal life in God. To tremble there was moral heroism; to hesitate there was divine. But even in the moment of drawing back came the large, eternal victory:—"Nevertheless, not what I will, but what Thou wilt." The white wings of the pure soul were dashed against the cold, sullen bars of the impossible: they were wounded and bruised; but they folded themselves gently, serenely, close to the Throne. That victory broke a heart—oh! such a heart!—ruined a hell; saved a world; and made an eternity possible—oh! such an eternity! "Thy will be done." Strange, strange, this

"Sob in silence with an upward gaze."

But stranger still had there been no sob.

Hull. H. ELVET LEWIS.

In Memoriam.

REV. THOMAS REES, D.D.

ON the first page of this Magazine for 1885 will be found a portrait and biographical sketch of the Rev. Dr. Rees, of Swansea. We little thought, when it appeared, that we should have so soon to announce the death of "the patriarch of Welsh Congregationalism." He died on Wednesday, April 29th, "with eye not dim, nor natural force abated." On the following Tuesday, "devout men carried him to his burial and made great lamentation over him." One who attended the funeral writes:—"Such a gathering was never seen down in Wales. From the house where he had lived to the graveyard where he sleeps, the road (some mile and a-half) was one mass of people; the funeral lasted all the way, it never went at all; the windows, the hedges, all filled with tearful faces. Wales wept like one man, and the text from which he had preached so frequently received such an illustration as it rarely had before:—'A good name is better than precious ointment, and the day of death than the day of one's birth.'"

The following resolution was adopted by the Congregational Union at its Assembly, on May 12th, in the City Temple. It expresses most felicitously the feeling of all who knew and loved Dr. Rees:—"That the Assembly desires to put on record its sense of the great loss which the churches it represents, and especially the churches of the Principality of Wales, have sustained by the death of the venerable Dr. Thomas Rees. When, at the last annual meeting, Dr. Rees was, by an all but unanimous vote, appointed Chairman of the Union for the present year, it was felt that the appointment was a fitting, though tardy, recognition of the signal service which, throughout a protracted ministry, he had rendered to the cause of vital religion and Evangelical Nonconformity. The piety and zeal which Dr. Rees evinced in early life led to his election to the pastoral office just as he entered manhood's estate; and, though entirely self-taught, he at once took his position as an efficient Christian teacher, and rose, through the several stages of a life of unstinted labour, to the foremost place among Welsh preachers and leaders of opinion. He brought to the work of the ministry great mental ability and vigorous natural eloquence, with a rare capacity of endurance and of generous enthusiasm; and these gifts he consecrated to the service of Christ and his brethren with a fidelity which knew no swerving, and in a spirit of magnanimity and self-sacrifice which drew to him the reverence and love of all who knew him. He has been suddenly called from the labour and conflicts of earth. The Assembly, which expected to sit at his feet to-day, mourns his absence, and yet is glad that his distinguished career closed with honour, and that it was permitted him, before hearing the 'Well done' of the Judge, to know that his fellow-workers here greatly loved him for what he was and what he had done. The Assembly prays that his example may abide as a living force in the churches and among his brethren in the ministry, making them steadfast and immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord."

ROSE EASTON.

By M. A. Paull, Author of "Whatsoever," "Tim's Troubles," "Friar Hildebrand's Cross," &c., &c.

Chapter IV.—*Continued.*

PETER had been preaching far more beautifully than ever lately, and Alice felt that Saxerby was altogether beneath his powers of mind and body; for not only was his intellect grand, but so were his personal appearance and the fine voice with which he had been endowed. One day she confided all these hopes to Rose, and asked her, "Don't you think, Rose, if Mr. Easton had just the same powers, you would want him to be in a London church?"

Rose laughed merrily at the rather humiliating appreciation of Paul which Alice appeared to have, but owned that she believed it was not a matter about which she should feel anxious in any case.

"Why not?" asked Alice.

"Because, dear, I can't trouble about these things. I believe that we have both put ourselves into God's hands, and asked Him to direct our steps exactly into that place where we can best serve Him. If, as I cannot doubt, He has brought us here, I could no more think it was my business to try to get away, than it was that of the Israelites in the desert to march, when the pillar of fire and pillar of cloud rested."

"Heaven helps those who help themselves, I thought," said Alice. "If we are to sit still and wait for good fortune because we are Christians, then good-bye to all honest getting forward by persevering effort."

"Surely Christian ministers are not quite in the same position as ordinary workers," said Rose. "If they are doing a good work in any place they may well be content till God unmistakably calls them to do a better."

Chapter V.—NEW WORK.

Neither Peter Gromer nor Paul Easton had been able, up to this time, to feel that they had obtained a genuine hold of the masses. Looking round upon their respectably dressed congregations, the text, "To the poor the gospel is preached," appeared to have been expunged from practical application, if not from the pages of the Bibles lying on the cushions of their pulpits.

It was not because either of them desired to exclude the poor; both of them would have said, and said truthfully, that they wished, above all things, to see them flocking into the free seats and into as many of the pews as were ready to receive them. It is true that some of the strange titles Peter Gromer had chosen for his sermons had now and then brought some young working men to hear him, out of curiosity, just as still more sensational placards had gathered crowds into other places of worship. But there was no conviction in the minds of the poor people of Saxerby that either of these two ministers had any such especial knowledge of

their needs, their difficulties, their desires, that it should induce them to seek their guidance in things spiritual.

Working men understand, if those who are in a higher social position do not, that a drinking man in their own class has almost no chance of rising in the world. The temperance movement, which was begun by working-men, and carried on for very many years in a great measure by themselves, only aided here and there by ministers and doctors and well-to-do tradespeople and employers of labour, they look upon as a great lever for raising the millions who toil to their true and honourable position. It necessarily follows that if Christianity means the elevation of all men, anything which tends in that direction is Christian in character, and everything which is likely to keep down and degrade humanity is anti-Christian. If this mode of reasoning is carried to its natural conclusion it will be evident that ministers who are known to drink intoxicants are not regarded generally by working-men as on the side of progress, nor in sympathy with the best aspirations of the poor.

Peter Gromer and Paul Easton would have been surprised if they had known how often the two little words, "he drinks," had neutralised the great good they might otherwise have been the means of accomplishing. Whether rightly or wrongly, working-men feel, and freely express the feeling, that if Christian ministers, who have got religion to make them happy, and generally more comforts and occupations and amusements than are to be found in working-men's homes, can't do without drink, even in order to set a good example, they can't be so very much in earnest as the followers of that self-denying Lord whose religion they proclaim to the world.

Paul Easton and Peter Gromer were both a little shy of proclaiming to their neighbours their resolve to become abstainers; and, in order to keep each other in countenance, they arranged to go together to a temperance meeting about to be held in Saxerby, and to sign their names in the Society's pledge-book, as a record of their determination made in secret before God in their own homes.

"If you sign, I will sign too, Paul," said Rose, when he had told her of their decision. "Of course, it is no giving up to me, because I have never taken anything of the kind."

"And yet," said Paul Easton, looking at her tenderly, "you thought I could not do without my wine and beer."

"Your work is so much more exhausting than mine, you know, dear," said Rose.

Paul Easton could not help laughing. "What have I said?" asked Rose, blushing beautifully in pretty confusion at her possible blunder; "brain work, I have always heard and read, is so much more exhausting than mere bodily toil."

"Have you no brain work, sweet?" asked Paul Easton, softly smoothing her brown hair. "Do you never weary yourself with calculating how to get twenty-five shillings' worth out of a

sovereign? Do you never puzzle over intricate patterns of knickerbockers, and jackets, and frocks, to be abstracted from the sound parts of half-worn garments of larger size? Oh, Rose, Rose! if anyone in the world wants a stimulating glass of bitter beer, or a refreshing glass of wine, it is the minister's wife who has to make a hundred and fifty pounds a year do the work of three hundred."

"I would rather have a cup of tea or a cup of coffee any day, than either wine or beer," said Rose. "I don't think women should ever take anything intoxicating. You know, dear, women's brains, and indeed their whole natures, are more likely to be affected than those of men; and if a woman begins to trust to stimulants of that kind, how terrible it is for her husband and children."

"I reason," said Paul, smiling, "that if women, with their more delicate organisations, and less powerful physical natures than men, can do without intoxicants, we men can also."

"At all events," said Rose, "you will let me sign with you; I should like to stand side by side with you in this, as in everything."

"Bravely said, dearest Rose," answered Paul Easton, "And do you think you could persuade Alice to sign also? Then we four should all begin to tread the new path openly together, and uphold each other in it."

Alice was not very easy to convince, but the idea that all of them thus signing the pledge together would create something of a sensation in Saxerby, influenced her more than she would have readily admitted. She knew Rose better than to suggest this effect to her; had she done so, the whole thing, Alice told herself, would be completely spoiled. So she yielded to the suggestion of her friend, and arranged that Peter and herself should call for Paul Easton and Rose on their way to the Saxerby Town Hall, where the meeting was to be held.

Quietly as the little party entered the room, the two ministers were observed, and welcomed with a heartiness they had not expected. A cordial invitation was given to them to ascend the platform, but this they declined, not deeming themselves, as yet, entitled to any place of honour. They all listened attentively to the various speeches, one of which especially appealed to Rose's heart; for it related to a mother's influence with her little ones in their childhood in regard to their drinking habits in the future.

"If mothers were fully alive to their power," said the speaker, "the whole question of the future drunkenness or sobriety of the English nation might be settled in the nurseries. Let drink be banished by every English mother from every child's lips, and drunkenness would be at an end."

The next speaker supplemented these words by dwelling on the necessity that the manufacture of these drinks should be abandoned. He also told of a teetotal mother, from whose home every drop of intoxicating beverages was about to be banished. This lady had two little boys, and she called one of them to her and bade him

smell at the bottle of wine she was about to pour away. The little fellow expressed great disgust. "What nasty stuff is that, mamma?" he asked; "it smells like medicine." Then, before she threw it away, she saw the other of her boys, and allowed him to smell it, expecting a similar remark. She felt horrified when, instead of disliking the smell as his brother had done, he said, innocently, "Oh! do let me taste it, mamma; whatever is it, it smells so good?"* And the mother, startled at the possibility of this sweet boy having inherited an unnatural appetite from some ancestor, felt all the more glad that no temptation to its development would assail him in his home.

When, at the close of the meeting, the two ministers and their wives signed the pledge of total abstinence, there was such applause as made Alice's heart beat, and her face flush brightly. This was the very thing most congenial to her feelings. Rose, on the contrary, shrank from the kindly-meant ovation, as something to be borne, of course, but also as something she hoped never to be obliged to encounter again.

"Would Mr. Gromer and Mr. Easton say a few words?" The Temperance Secretary, thoroughly pleased at such a result of the meeting, begged this as a favour. Paul Easton at once stepped upon the platform, and in a few modest, manly words, thanked the teetotalers present for their kind reception of himself and his co-signers of the temperance pledge. Peter and Alice had a hurried confabulation.

"Now is the moment," said the young wife eagerly; "strike while the iron is hot, Peter, or you may never have such an opportunity again. I shall feel miserably disappointed if you don't."

Peter had no wish to miserably disappoint his Alice, and yet he had a sense that to yield to her wish he should be acting unworthily of his profession, and simply for an effect, the last thing he had desired to do, since those solemn watches by the little coffin of his first-born. But Alice's promptings, if obeyed at all, must be obeyed at once; he sprang on the platform, therefore, shook back his mass of dark locks from his white forehead, chose the most flowery, picturesque words that came to his mind, uttered a few pretty commonplaces, and then announced that he would give some of his reasons for his adhesion to the temperance movement in his sermon next Sunday evening. The announcement was, of course, applauded vociferously, and Alice felt she had made a decided hit for her husband's increased popularity. As they left the hall and mingled amongst the crowd, she had the pleasure of hearing from many lips the words, "I shall go and hear Mr. Gromer next Sunday," and similar expressions, that perfectly satisfied her.

"What a difference there is between you and Mr. Easton," she said to her husband, when they had left their friends, and were seated at their own supper table. "I don't believe if he lived to be ninety, he would ever be popular. He can't catch the ear of the people."

* A fact.

"My dear Alice," answered Peter, "seeing his congregation is just as large as mine, that remark is hardly justified." And yet, greatly as he respected Paul Easton, Peter believed Alice was right to a very great degree. He certainly could command the attention of his hearers in a way that Paul Easton did not. But was that for the same reason that a clap of thunder is more listened to than the stirrings of a refreshing breeze; simply because of its greater novelty?

Saxerby's weekly newspaper, *The Saxerby Reporter*, reported minutely the proceedings at the temperance meeting in the Town Hall. Every word the Rev. Peter Gromer had uttered was given *in extenso*, as the printer's apprentice, who was fond of Latin words, declared; and several jubilant teetotalers had so warmly expressed their delight at the adhesion of the two preachers, in such various letters, that the usual correspondence column had not been sufficient to meet the demand for "space"; and the perplexed editor, after pondering the matter for some time, and weighing the question with many pros and cons, decided to abandon the insertion of a very interesting "cutting" he had destined for the *Reporter* that week, in order to give the letters. Pecuniary considerations turned the scale; he knew well that every letter-writer would be too ambitious of seeing his production in print to hesitate as to the purchase of several copies for circulation amongst his and her friends. Nor was this hope disappointed; the "interesting correspondence relative to the public avowal of temperance sentiment by two of our deservedly popular dissenting ministers," as he called it in a paragraph amongst "local items," caused a quick sale of the paper, and the previously unheard-of necessity for a second edition of *The Saxerby Reporter*. Much telegraphing to London ensued, for more copies of that portion of the paper printed in the great metropolis, and the second edition of the weekly came out next day in due form. The temperance party, interested naturally in both their ministerial converts, were anxious to hear Paul Easton, and still more Peter Gromer. The special nature of Peter's proclamation decided most of them to hear him in the evening, and therefore to hear Paul Easton in the morning. There were more strangers in Paul Easton's chapel than had been known there for a long time on that especial Sunday morning; and few who were there failed to be exceedingly interested and profited. The minister was not a brilliant preacher, but he was a helpful one. There was no attempt at sensation, however, or to make capital out of the event of the week. The only reference he made to the action was in his prayer, when, for the first time, he asked God's blessing on the temperance movement as a means to the great end of advancement in holiness and right living, and as a proof of our desire to practise such self-denial as might preserve us from one specious snare of the enemy of man's soul, and prove our sympathy with those exposed still more to this form of temptation.

In the evening his congregation was unusually small, and that

of Peter Gromer as large as his chapel would accommodate. Stimulated by Alice, he had prepared a fine speech, rather than a helpful sermon, a kind of brilliant sky-rocket, which, though it ascended heavenwards, too soon fell again to earth. But he took his listeners by storm, as such sermons are wont to do; and perhaps he felt more dissatisfied with himself for preaching it than any of the congregation ever guessed.

But the sympathy with their needs and aspirations that had been made manifest to the people of Saxerby, by the adhesion of the two ministers to the temperance pledge, drew men and women to their chapels, and to seek their advice in private, and produced results far more blessed than that of occasionally filling every seat. And now, as all through the home life that had been gladdened and blessed by her presence, Paul Easton realised the priceless value of such a wife as God in His mercy had vouchsafed to him. He was appalled, sometimes, at the number of painful cases of secret intemperate indulgence in alcoholics which were brought to his notice. And who so well as Rose could "discharge the delicate offices for which a woman's tact is especially needed," in relation to the secret drinking of mothers and wives? Not unfrequently, Paul Easton listened to some sad family history, seeing no way whatever of helping the speaker, and obliged to confess his inability. But in these cases he seldom failed to add, "Yet it is possible Mrs. Easton may see what can be done better than we do; shall I call her?"

The offer was at first rejected in more than one instance, only to be caught at more eagerly afterwards; for, by degrees, in a quiet way, it was whispered in Saxerby that Rose Easton had a wondrous power of reclaiming her drunken sisters, and of leading them to the Saviour for strength and help, guiding them carefully and patiently through weeks and months of difficulty and temptation, till danger was past, because they had learned to be utterly afraid to trust themselves. Husbands blessed her for what she had done for their wives, children for the reclamation of their mothers, and, feeling thus towards her, they loved to gather for worship where they could see and bless her, in her husband's chapel.

Thoughtful love made Rose Easton very quick-sighted. These women, of very various classes in society, whom she had, as it were, been made instrumental by God to save from themselves, needed some work to do for others, in their turn, if they were to be kept from relapses. A scheme that might be small in its beginning, but which was capable of almost limitless expansion, opened out before her as she pondered; and very soon she proposed it to her husband, after apprising him of the necessity she felt to do good to those who should be the workers out of her plan, even more than to those who should be the obvious recipients of any good it might effect.

Perhaps it is often lost sight of, that the reflex action of benevolent enterprises may effect as much good as their direct action.

(*To be continued.*)

MAY MEETING NOTES.

CONGREGATIONAL UNION.

THIS year's Assembly of the Congregational Union will, as the *Nonconformist and Independent* says, be remembered by a character which was all its own. The ministers and delegates met on Monday, May 11th, under the influence of events very different in kind, and, accordingly, with very mixed feelings. There was the loss of a venerable leader to be lamented, and an outburst of sunshine upon the nation to rejoice over. Dr. THOMAS REES, Chairman of the Union, had died, and almost at the same time the bow of peace was seen in the political sky, where, just before, nothing but the portents of a great war met the eye. The power of these concurrent causes was felt throughout the meetings in the pathos and hope which alternately marked the language of the different speakers; at the same time we doubt whether any member of the Union can remember meetings characterised by more vigour and hopefulness.

The choice by the Committee of the Union of the Rev. JOHN THOMAS, D.D., of Liverpool, to fill the chair from which Providence had withheld Dr. REES, was enthusiastically ratified when Dr. THOMAS entered upon his important duties. It was felt that not only had the Principality been honoured thereby, but that Wales had itself increased its titles to fraternal regard by supplying so promptly from among its sons one in every respect fitted to succeed the revered pastor who had been suddenly called away. Scarcely had the new Chairman's voice been heard before everyone felt that he was in his right place. The tribute paid by Dr. THOMAS to "the friend of his early ministry," and his testimony to the priceless value of his public services, were as well-judged as they were well-deserved.

The "Address from the Chair" was to a great extent, an illustration and enforcement of the main argument which Dr. Rees had intended to lay before the Union:—"A powerful pulpit is the very life of Evangelical Nonconformity." Many of our readers may be glad to know that the address which the late chairman prepared has been published (by John Snow and Co.), under the title of "A Powerful Pulpit." It was passed by him for press only a few days before his unexpected and lamented death. We trust it will have a wide circulation, and that its wise counsels may prove of service to many, more especially those who are just entering ministerial services.

It is not our province to chronicle at length the Union meetings. We must refer our readers to the excellent reports given in the *Nonconformist and Independent* of May 15th and 22nd.

THE CHURCH-AID SOCIETY IN THE ASSEMBLY OF THE UNION.

At the Friday Session of the Union, an important statement was made by the Rev. Dr. Hannay, relative to the critical position of the Church-Aid Society. In the course of his remarks, he said:—"The Council of the Church-Aid Society has entered into the most serious deliberation in regard to the present position of affairs. It finds, for one thing, that if the Council—that is, the body which represents you in carrying on this work of church-aid and home missionary extension—is to raise the Church-Aid Society to its true plane, and equip it for the service which the churches ought to perform for one another, and for England at this time, it, on its own part, must have more direct access to you who have the money, more direct access to the churches, more full conference with the executives of your county associations; that the Church-Aid Society, retaining the leading features of its constitution untampered with, must become more compact, a living unity with a central—I do not shrink from using the word—a central force, whose operation shall be felt in all parts of the land. I do not hesitate to use the word, because the central force will be 'central' after the fashion in which the House of Commons is central. It will be a force representative of you, gathering up the mind, the purpose, the spirit of Christian enterprise which exists in all the churches, and acting as the organ of your will and aspirations. There was a time when we heard a good deal of abuse of this innocent word 'central.' I think it arose from the fact of its being supposed that I was Mr. Central, or that some one else in the Memorial Hall stood in that relation to the churches. The central body this Society provides for is yourselves in your representatives, capable of speaking articulately, and capable of acting for you. With that view it has been resolved to take certain steps, and to place burdens intolerable for human flesh to bear upon the central office. The one regret—which is a very profound regret to me—in regard to this matter is that the action which the Council has felt compelled to take—and which it takes, I think, by a unanimous vote—will lead to the resignation of his office by my dear friend, the Rev. E. J. Hartland, who has occupied the position of secretary from the first. It is no secret to many of you that, especially for the last two years, Mr. Hartland has been suffering from a painful malady, which, while it has not interfered with such duties of the office as the past scheme of working has left possible to him, would interfere with the new modes of action for which the Council has provided. Mr. Hartland has, therefore, tendered his resignation, and that resignation has, to the great grief of most of us, had to be accepted. I should not do justice to my own feelings if I did not say that, during the six years of Mr. Hartland's tenure of office, there has been unbroken concord and friendly communion between himself and me, standing, also, in a certain official relation to the Society, and that I do not see what, on the

lines to which we have been practically confined, we could have done that has not been done in the past. Mr. Hartland carries with him into comparative retirement—holding office, however, until his successor is appointed—the sympathy and affectionate regard of those with whom he has been connected. Let me ask you, each one, to make this a matter of personal thought, and the exercise of personal influence in all parts of the country where you may reside. The Congregational Body has not been advancing. Here is the weak point—and I take it as one of the most emphatic; one of the clearest and most emphatic of the lessons which recent statistics have taught us."

ANNUAL MEETING OF CHURCH-AID SOCIETY.

THE annual meeting of the Society was held at the Memorial Hall, on May 12. Mr. Samuel Morley, M.P., presided, and there was a good attendance. The report showed that, during the six years of its existence, the Society has expended an average of £34,955, or £9,901 beyond what was expended by the county associations and Home Missionary Society put together before 1879. During the year the Society has rendered aid to 756 churches, and 345 evangelistic or mission stations, under the care of 497 pastors and 137 missionaries and pastor evangelists. This is an advance of 75 congregations on those reported last year. Only three counties report a decline in membership, amounting to 47, whilst the clear gain has been 3,769. The congregations aided contain altogether 114,551 persons, of whom 39,135 are Church members. The Sunday-schools contain 90,669 young people, taught by 9,699 teachers. These Churches have raised from their own resources for the support of the ministry, £37,251; for incidental expenses, £18,106; for Sunday-schools, £5,576; for the Society, £1,994; for Foreign Missions, £1,761; and for various other purposes £7,005. The Church-Aid Society has assisted them to the extent of £23,439. The Society has received from all sources £36,707, and its expenditure has been within £286 of that amount. The death of Mr. R. S. Hudson had occasioned a considerable diminution of the income of the Society, as he subscribed £500 a year through the central office, besides being a liberal subscriber through various county associations. The Council has felt compelled to sanction grants to the counties amounting to £874 more than the probable income. A calculation has been made showing that if one in five of the estimated congregations were to subscribe to the Society—50,000 of them no more than a penny a month—an income of £54,000 would be realised, or nearly double that promised for the present year. A special appeal is therefore to be made to the churches to come generously to the aid of the Society at this crisis in its history.

Referring to this Magazine the Report said:—"During the year the circulation of the *Congregational Magazine* has considerably increased, and for the first time a clear, though small, profit has

been made. For the present year fresh arrangements have been made with the printer and publisher, which will not only save the Society from any loss, but also, it is hoped, make the Magazine to some extent a source of income."

Excellent addresses, each admirable in its way, were subsequently delivered by the Revs. W. Pierce (Leytonstone), Principal Fairbairn (Airedale), Eric Lawrence (Halifax), and Mr. G. W. Knox (London).

The Rev. Dr. Fairbairn, in his address, referring to the suggestion of the Report that the Society had reached a crisis in its history, observed, "A crisis! well, that's a good place for strong men to be in." He expressed his sympathy with ministers toiling in lonely and poor country places, and referred to his own experience of the kind of life they have to live. He knew how hard it was for one to think high thoughts of God and noble thoughts of man with the wolf standing at the door, and only a thin door between him and the wolf. But this was not a question of pity, but of conscience and duty before God and before His Christ. He then showed what Nonconformity had done in the development of the noblest life of the country, and strengthened his argument by a splendid review of what Puritanism had done for America. This Free-church life was a thing to be proud of and to support with all liberality and zeal. Dr. Fairbairn concluded with an effective recital of the dream which Francis Xavier had on the eve of his departure for his foreign mission work, wherein, as the vast population of India and China and Japan passed in front of him in vision as the conquests of the Gospel, he cried, "Yet more, O Lord, yet more!"

Courtship and Marriage.—With an honourable girl, and an honourable man, an engagement carries with it something more than a few sunny months of courtship. After courtship comes marriage; after marriage comes the home. Let me ask you to consider what you must have in your future husband, in your future wife, to make it even tolerable to spend twenty or thirty or forty years together. There are some very commonplace things you ought to make sure of. Good sound health is one thing; there are twenty grave reasons for insisting on it. Next to this I should put perfect truthfulness; the man who will lie to other people will lie to his wife; the girl who will lie to other people will lie to her husband. Next to truthfulness, temperance, industry, and courage. Then fortitude; that is, the power to bear pain and trouble without whining. Then unselfishness; for the selfish man, the selfish girl, though drawn out of selfishness in the early weeks of courtship, will settle back into it again when the wear and worry of life come on. I believe in "falling in love." The imagination should be kindled and the heart touched; there should be enthusiasm and even romance to the very end of life, or else the home is wanting in its perfect happiness and grace. The wonderful charm which makes the wife more to the husband than all other women, and the husband more to the wife than all other men—this is necessary to a happy marriage.

R. W. Dale.

OUR LIBRARY TABLE.

ANOTHER edition of the useful little *Manual for Ministers and Deacons*, from the pen of the Rev. Samuel McAll, has been published by W. Mack. It treats of the constitution, discipline, and services of the Congregational churches, in a pithy yet suggestive manner. Every minister, deacon, and student should possess a copy; and church members should not rest satisfied without one.

The Biblical Treasury is the title of a series of volumes designed to be illustrative companions of the Bible. The two we have now under review cover the ground from Exodus to Deuteronomy, and from Joshua to 2 Samuel respectively. The matter is made up of extracts from many sources—the latest up to date—and Sunday School teachers will find them very useful in the saving of time and in the furnishing of pointed illustrations. (S. S. Union.)

We are glad to call the attention of our readers to a little work from the pen of the late Dr. Rees, of Swansea—*Papers on Subjects relating to Wales*. 2s. Published by John Snow & Co. These Papers, containing important information as to Wales and its people, cannot fail to be highly interesting and useful to the general public, but more especially to Congregationalists. Much has been done in recent years to remove the ignorance which exists relative to the Principality, and we do not know a better way in which true information can be imparted than by the circulation of these "Papers."

Child-Life in Chinese Homes, with many Illustrations. This book, by Mrs. Bryson, of the London Mission, Wuchang, China, is pre-eminently a capital book for children. Parents who would wish to have their boys and girls interested in the story of missionary enterprise cannot do better than get this book for them. The first part deals with the social surroundings of Chinese children—their home, their school, their play, their holidays, and their worship. The second part contains sketches from Chinese child-life, including such tales as "The Flower that Faded," "The Boy who Became a Doctor," "How Swei-Ku was Cured of Running Away," and many others. The illustrations, as usual in the Society's publications, are excellent. (Religious Tract Society.)

The Preacher's Commentary on the Book of Leviticus, by the Rev. W. Harvey Jellie, will be found very useful as a help towards pulpit preparations. It works upon homiletical and experimental, rather than upon critical and analytical, lines. Each chapter opens with Suggestive Readings, followed by Homilies on sections and topics; also Outlines on each verse. Some of the homilies and outlines are from the pen of the Rev. Frederick W. Brown, who assisted the author in the Homiletics. The Illustrated Addenda to each chapter afford choice quotation with which to enforce a truth; while three indices, with exact and detailed classification of topics, analysis, &c., render access to the contents of the volume simple and direct. It is published by R. D. Dickinson.

Of making many books there is no end, and much reading is a weariness of the flesh, saith the wise man. If so then, what of to-day? we were disposed to ask after reading the Rev. G. A. Shaw's book on *Madagascar and France*. To such an inquiry there can be only one reply—Give us more of such books. Here is a man writing in a most interesting way of what he knows, bearing testimony in a calm and clear manner to what he has seen—made *to sell*, but *no sell* to the buyer. France like the *Jingoes* of Great Britain, believes in smashing. The rage for "glory" is still, as it has ever been, the curse of the French. In addition to the personal insults and the wrongs done to the people by the attempt of France to take possession where they have no right, and that too against the feelings of the nation, you have a clear, interesting, yea, soul-stirring narrative of the almost miraculous progress made by the inhabitants in civilisation and Christianity—together with an account of the habits, language, &c., of the people, and its adaptability for foreign enterprise and commerce. A book of interest to the commercial and Christian world. Happy for Onesimus, yea, for the Churches, that Paul was sent to jail; so the enforced absence of this earnest and faithful missionary from Madagascar is already proving a blessing to this country by allowing him time to write this book. It is published by the Religious Tract Society.

THE TEACHERS' PAGE.

INTERNATIONAL LESSONS FOR JUNE.

HITHERTO the lessons from the Epistles have been taken from those that are recognised as Paul's, and more especially from those which he wrote during his first and second Roman imprisonments. This month we have three lessons of a supplementary character. Two are taken from the Epistle to the Hebrews (ch. i. 1—8; ii. 1—4; ix. 1—12), and one from another Apostle (2 Peter i. 1—11), embodying and expressing the characteristic Pauline idea, that Christian *stability* only comes out of continuous Christian *growth*.

In giving a series of lessons on the life and character and teaching of Paul, as the divinely-inspired Apostle of the Gentiles, it would have been very wrong to treat only in an indirect way Paul's central point. So we have two lessons dealing with the person and office of the Lord Jesus Christ. They are taken from an epistle which is not universally admitted to have been written by Paul, but which is felt to be strictly Pauline in its teachings, and which presents doctrinal truth in a pictorial form helpful to children. Dean Alford pleads for the authorship of Barnabas; Dean Plumptre for that of the eloquent and rhetorical Apollos; while other writers conclude that there is as good authority *for* Paul's authorship as against it.

Hitherto the lessons from the Epistles have concerned practical details of Christian conduct, but the first two of those before us this month are distinctly doctrinal, but with practical bearings; for doctrine is never taught in Scripture for doctrine's sake: it is always treated as the inspiration, the guidance, or the support of holy living. In teaching doctrine we should bear this always in mind, and take care to set it forth on its practical rather than on its controversial sides.

Teaching doctrine to children is, no doubt, very difficult work, but these lessons remind us that we have two very important aids. We have the interest of associating doctrine with the *person* of the Lord Jesus; and we have the help of Old Testament ceremonial in the pictorial presentation of it. We can always interest children in the life of Jesus; it was the light upon His work. The old dispensation painted Christian truth for the *child-age* of the world; and the painting may be made attractive and suggestive to *child-souls* now.

To help our fellow-workers to see precisely what has to be taught this month, we give the following preview:—

I. The work of Christ *for* the believer. This includes the work of Christ as the *Son*, revealing God to us under one particular aspect as our *Father*. And the work of Christ as the *Priest*, accomplishing our redemption and occupying the positions of Representative, Mediator, and Intercessor.

II. The work of Christ *in* the believer. A constant inspiration to *progress* in the Christian life and duty. And that means a help to daily self-culture, and a guidance in the daily wise use of the various "means of grace."

But this month is also our Review month, and in this the *Golden Text* should help us: "Fight the good fight of faith; lay hold on eternal life." (1 Tim. vi. 12.)

We can find in the teachings of the half-year varying illustrations of the following points: Paul's life was a *fight* with men and things. It was a *good fight*—for it was moral, and involved no bloodshed or misery, as national wars do. It was a fight under a *good leader*—even Christ the Lord. It was for a *good object*—even the preservation and spread of the "faith once delivered unto the saints." And it was carried on unto a *good issue*—even "eternal life."

Paul says to us still: "Be ye, therefore, followers of me, even as I also am of Christ."

ROBERT TUCK.

THANK God He sometimes makes a man
On such a broad, commodious plan;
So crowned with every grace and power,
So rich in Heaven's holiest dower,
That all are proud to own a place
In such a highly gifted race.

M. D. B.

THE REV. HENRY ALLON, D.D.

WE have pleasure in presenting our readers with a portrait of the Rev. Henry Allon, who for so many years has been the esteemed pastor of Union Chapel, Islington.

We learn, from a sketch in the *Congregationalist*, that Dr. Allon was born at Welton, near Hull, in 1818. He was educated at Cheshunt College, and, on the completion of his course there, became, in 1844, co-pastor with the late Rev. Thos. Lewis, at Islington, to whom he succeeded in 1852. Few churches, either in London or the country, carry on a greater variety of Christian service, or conduct it with more method and energy, than the one of which Dr. Allon is pastor.

In 1864 the members of the Congregational Union asked him to occupy the presidential chair, and, in 1882, on the occasion of the

Jubilee of the Union, they again conferred that honour upon him. As Editor of the *British Quarterly Review*, and as Hon. Secretary of Cheshunt College, Dr. Allon has rendered the churches no mean service. But it is by his earnest endeavours to improve Congregational psalmody that he has best established his claim to the gratitude of Congregationalists. The service of praise at Union Chapel shows how possible it is to preserve perfect simplicity while attaining a high degree of beauty and effectiveness in ritual.

Dr. Allon commands, as he merits, the respect and honour of all his brethren, the admiration of a large circle who know him as a public man, and the affectionate regard of those who enjoy a closer intimacy.

WORK AND WAGES.

A SUNDAY AFTERNOON TALK WITH WORKING PEOPLE, IN THE TOWN HALL, BIRMINGHAM.

MY text naturally divides itself into two parts, *Work* and *Wages*.

I. WORK. We are all workers, or ought to be. That is a good maxim which says, "If a man won't work, neither shall he eat." It is good for every man to do something.

Some of us poorer people, who have to toil so hard and so long, sometimes wish we had nothing to do. I dare say many of you have often felt like that. I know nothing which would make you so completely miserable as to have your wish. The hardest work in the world is to have nothing to do. Don't be alarmed—I am not going to address you on the advantages of labour. I leave that for those simpletons to do who never did a day's hard work in their lives; I know too much of the disadvantages of long, continuous toil. But I know nothing which would make you so completely miserable, and which would bring you all sorts of disease, so much as having no work to do.

Charles Dickens, in his American papers, tells of a prison which he visited, whose inmates were condemned to solitary confinement with no compulsion to labour. As a rule, the prisoners are not long in the prison before they beg most piteously for work of some kind.

Some people's notion of work is to do as little of it as possible. They neither like work, nor those who set them to it. And when they are forced to do a bit, they go to it as late as they dare, and leave it as early as they can. I once knew a boy who worked in a factory. Through some cause he was out of employment for a time. His father sent him seeking another place every morning. But, whilst seeking work, the lad was praying that he might not find it, and of course he never did. And if his father had not got him a place, he might have remained idle for ever. And so it is with a great many men. They have an idle bone in their bodies, and it is so big that it influences all the rest.

Many years ago, a street worker went to hear a lecture on some

subject with which was mixed up the division of labour. The following day, his fellow-labourer, who was an Irishman, asked him about the lecture. In his own blunt fashion he told Paddy that there was to be a better state of things introduced. The lecturer had said it was high time that some of those who had done the hard work of the world should ask for a new arrangement, &c., &c. "Well," said the Irishman, with the ready wit of his race, "sure it's myself believes all that. Division of labour! Yes, sure. Well, have it so, and you and I will begin the new division at once. You shall take this rammer in both of your hands, lift it up, and with all your might bring it down on the paving stones. And I will stand and watch you do it, and will fold my arms and say, Good, my boy; do it again."

Pat is by no means the only person whose share is to stand and look on. Heaps and heaps of such men are to be found. In municipal, social, political, and philanthropic work it is so. Many never do anything to make the world better, but grumble hard enough at those who do.

Some are willing to work, but can't get the work to do. Throughout the country thousands are unemployed. Men stand idle in the market-place, and no one comes to hire them. Of late years, ship-loads of men have been sent off as emigrants to other lands. The best of our artizans, the cleverest of our workmen, and the most sober and strong of our labourers have been transplanted to the Far West, to break up the waste lands of that country. The aged, the poor, the infirm are left behind as an additional burden to the industrious at home. To me these are sorrowful facts. That men should be shipped off who would gladly stop at home if they could live; that hundreds of thousands of men who are able and willing to work should be idle, is a shame and disgrace to a great nation like this. I do not complain of the men who have gone away. I am glad if any of them can find homes for themselves and their little ones elsewhere. My anger is against the system which makes it necessary for them to leave us. How and why is it so? The ready answer usually given is that we are too thick on the ground. The land will not support us. I reject all such answers as unworthy of a nation which spends a million a year on its royal family, and allows a few hundred individuals to pocket, I know not how many millions, in the shape of pay and pensions, for doing nothing but obstruct and hinder those who are trying to do the nation's work. The real answer, put in plain language, is that we English people have allowed a handful of men to drive us off the green hillsides and lovely valleys of our own country. Not content with our fields, they have enclosed our common lands, and scarcely left us enough in which to be decently buried, to say nothing of enough on which to live. We have long allowed a few selfish men to throw farms out of cultivation, and to destroy homesteads in order to preserve game. It is time now we turned our attention *to preserving men.* If we do not, the time may come, must come, and is now fast coming, when we shall seek in vain for the sturdy race of labourers

who cultivate our fields and produce our harvests of laughing, golden grain. But I hasten on.

Some men do work which had better far be left undone. And this brings me for a moment into another line of thought. I know many men who are busy enough, but they are always doing mischief. Neither they nor anybody else seem to be much better for all they do. Sometimes they and their friends are a great deal worse, and the evil they sow often spreads far beyond the range of their own little fields.

Into this class I put all those bad men who are for ever poisoning the atmosphere of our workshops; who never seem so happy as when they can lead some young man into sin. Here also I place those who serve the world, the flesh, and the devil, with all their might, as so many do. I have not time to stop for details here, or I might give you many illustrations of the thought I am trying to express. But need I stay for a moment to do this even if I were willing? Are there not, within the range of my voice, at this moment, many of you who are doing the devil's work, and know well enough it would be better far for you to leave all such work undone? I have no doubt there are many wives here who could tell a sad tale of sorrow and pain, all brought on because Jim or Jack has been too busy doing bad work. Let me turn away from this part of my subject by quoting the words of an old book which I dearly love, which says, "Whatsoever a man sows, that shall he also reap."

II. Wages. Now I come to the second part of my text—*Wages.* When men work, they expect to be paid wages of some sort. I have a story in one of my books which tells about a husband and wife who managed to quarrel a great deal. One day they got to fighting in the street. A man who lived opposite went out to part them. Just as he got upon the scene, the husband was about to fell his wife with his fist. The neighbour stopped him from knocking the woman down, and with a well-aimed blow sent the husband rolling over on the stones of the street. He had no sooner done so, however, than the man's wife paid him for his labour by seizing him by the hair of his head. She held him until her husband got to his feet, when they both gave him a good thrashing. That was a curious way of paying a man for his work. I hope none of you may either have to do such work, or get such wages.

Yes, we have a curious way of paying wages. Here is one man who goes out with an army to war. He comes home covered with glory; that is, he comes home reeking with human blood, for that is what war glory means. He is made a lord, gets an enormous sum of money, all for destroying human life. But here is a doctor, who has spent all his days and years in ceaseless efforts to *save* human life. What do we pay him as wages? Why, if he hasn't managed to scrape money enough together to keep him when he is old, we send him off to end his days in the workhouse as a pauper, if none of his friends are prepared to support him.

England is a very rich country. How is all its wealth produced?

By the toil and labour of its millions of workers. Do the workers get the wealth as their wages? I fear that those who do least work get all the plums and fruit out of the pudding, and the toilers barely get what the idlers leave.

But, my friends, I will now take you into departments in which men are paid in just proportion to the work they do. "He that sows to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption." I was once called to see a dying man. It was early in the morning. The room in which he lay was as destitute of furniture as a prison cell. There was just the heap of rags and the old bedstead on which he was dying. He was altogether unconscious, and right beyond the reach of any words I might have spoken. That man was a good workman, and had been in the receipt of large wages. But he had worked hard at drinking and gambling, and what were the wages he had been paid? Poverty, broken health, and an untimely death.

Come with me to yonder building. We enter its wards, and soon discover that we are in the workhouse. Now I am not going to tell you that *all* inmates of such places are there because of their own folly and sin. I remember hearing of a visitor who once went to a workhouse ward among the aged. In his visit he stopped at the bed of an old man who had lain there for many years. Whilst addressing the old pauper, he began to condole with him. "Stop," said the old man, raising himself on to his elbow as he spoke, "don't pity me, sir. I am an inmate of the bastile it is true, but that is no fault of mine." Then, taking his nightcap from his head, and looking straight into the face of his visitor, he said, "I am a King's son, sir. Some day my Father will send for me to His home, and when that time comes I dare say I shall find that the poorhouse is no farther from heaven's gates than the queen's palace."

But I will ask you to look into the sick ward and see those men, and women too. Young, comparatively, many of them, but sick and sad. What does it mean? Why, just this, that they have been working in the ways of sin, and this is the sure pay which they are getting. The old book tells us that "the wages of sin is death." There are no truer words in any book, and they are true in this life. I need not, and will not, dwell, as some seem so fond of doing, on the punishment of the future. I leave all that now. But I must say that men who sin often get a sad and heavy payment in this world. The wages follow the work. Look at the broken health, the blighted prospects, the ruined character, the wasted strength, and you look at the wages which follow the work of sin. My friends, I am anxious to lead you out of the paths of wickedness into the work of righteousness; her ways are peace, her wages, the witness of a good conscience, and the smile of God. And there is not a man here God does not want. Get into your minds this one grand thought that God seeks you, that Christ calls you, that the Lord Jesus redeemed you. And that now, just now, every wanderer may come home to Him. May he help us all to come! May you all be workers for God, and truth, and purity; and may you all have the wages of well doing, and the rewards of the faithful!

Birmingham. CHARLES LEACH.

THE EVANGELISTIC WORK OF THE CHURCHES.

FROM A PAPER READ AT WAKEFIELD AT THE DEVOTIONAL MEETING OF THE YORKSHIRE CONGREGATIONAL UNION, APRIL 13th, 1885.

OF all the religions of the earth the Christian is the most aggressive. If any assembly of Christ's people are doing nothing to bring in subjection the world around, they are disobeying His last and most pressing commands. It may be a good thing for a number of people to assemble themselves together, and form themselves into a Christian Church for their due edification and comfort; but they are not Christians in deed and in truth, if they are not using their influence and their best endeavours to bring others to know and believe in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Of course there are always exceptions to a rule, and there are individuals who cannot, from age, sickness or infirmity, take an active part in evangelistic work; but they must be few and isolated who cannot do something to promote the Redeemer's Kingdom, who cannot invite parent or child, brother or sister, neighbour or friend to come to Christ.

This evangelistic work should be confined to no class of the community. The poorer and larger portion of our brethren will naturally be especially looked after, but no section of the community should be neglected. The children of the middle-class, who do not attend our Sunday Schools, require particular care. Special services for them at our watering-places have been found very useful in the holidays in bringing before their notice the paramount claims of the Gospel. Many years ago, in the largest Congregational Church in Yorkshire, drawing-room prayer meetings were frequently held in the most influential families of the congregation, which had a most useful effect in bringing under the notice of the pastor and deacons, the young people who were rising in life and who had just left school. By this means, at a most important period of life, before they had been hardened by contact with the world, or led away by its pleasures, many decided for Christ. Evening prayer meetings at the houses of the people by turn have also been found very useful, and for many obvious reasons are strongly to be recommended.

In evangelistic work an earnest band of lay preachers is of great importance. In some parts of the country, and in at least one town in Yorkshire, every Sunday a number of well-educated laymen set out from their homes to preach the glad tidings of Salvation. Engaged during the week in their several employments, they are well able to understand the trials, difficulties, and temptations of business men. They also succeed in bringing home to the hearts of their hearers with great clearness and power the cardinal truths of the New Testament, by happy and familiar illustration and racy and cogent argument.

Some ministers have a very ready way of enlisting young men of their congregations in this work, which, if followed by others, would increase tenfold the power of our churches for good. Nor should we forget to enumerate in evangelistic work the great advantage of a highly trained ministry. More young men from our middle-class should be encouraged to devote themselves to this, the most important and the most glorious of all work. We are afraid that Christian parents have not always looked favourably upon the wishes of their sons, who were thus earnestly desirous to dedicate themselves to Christ. It is right that the most commanding eloquence, the highest intellect, and the best business talents should be used in the Master's service. Congregationalists have always believed in an educated ministry, and at the present time when elementary education is making such gigantic strides, and the whole of the rising generation have to pass through our schools, it was never more important that we should send from our Colleges, men who are able to grasp with a firm hand and meet with a clear and steady brain all the specious arguments which continually arise against the truth. We require, therefore, men of culture, men of power, who shall give all their time, energies and thoughts to the work of the ministry and the proclamation of the Gospel. We are thankful to think that our colleges were never turning out better men. We commend them to your earnest prayers, warm sympathy and generous support, as active and powerful auxiliaries to the evangelisation of the country.

Some years ago, as a representative of the Union, we visited in the north an interesting mission station, situated amongst the hills. There was a beau-

tiful little church with its slender spire; and nearly two miles away was its mission church, with its Sunday school and afternoon service. That morning every scholar on the books was present, and some of them had to walk three miles. At the ringing of the bell, the whole hamlet seemed to fill the sanctuary, and he who conducted the service seldom had a more attentive congregation. Since then we learn that they have added another mission station. If a church in a scattered district can do this, with but a few inhabitants, how much greater opportunities have we who live in populous districts with very many openings for evangelistic work, and where the population is continually increasing? And where also there is much greater prospect of self-sustaining churches being formed, which themselves shall scatter blessings around in their various religious and philanthropic institutions.

We are all agreed that Evangelistic work is not to be helped by state-aid or parliamentary grants. The Episcopalian Church has done far better and accomplished much greater good since she has depended more upon the liberality and willinghood of her people. Let her but be completely separated from the State and there will open out before her a boundless field of usefulness. As for ourselves we have long maintained that true and honest effort must be voluntary. In the service of Christ there should be no bondage, not even with golden chains, but warm and hearty work for the salvation of our fellow-men.

As Milton renders it:—

"Our voluntary service He requires
Not our necessitated; such with Him
Finds no acceptance, nor can find: for how
Can hearts not free be tried whether they serve
Willing or no, who will but what they must
By destiny, and can no other choose."

If we are to extend with the increase of the population, and if we are to make any impression upon the mass of ungodliness in our midst, we must do two things: first, we must open churches in all our new districts and populous neighbourhoods; secondly, we must build mission churches, or hire suitable rooms in our poorer and more densely populated districts. This has been carried out lately in London with the happiest results.

All the statistics of church accommodation lately published have established two facts which cannot be gainsaid:—

1st. That our agricultural and scattered districts are amply provided with churches.

2nd. That it is in our large towns and rapidly increasing neighbourhoods where the deficiency really occurs, and where we should do our utmost to supply the lack of spiritual accommodation.

Mr. G. G. Scott, eldest son of the architect, the late Sir Gilbert Scott, says upon this subject:—"Our towns are the centre of all our political and industrial activity. It is in them that the remarkable increase in our population is entirely concentrated. Our agricultural population, as a matter of fact, is decreasing. If our towns are Christian, England will be Christian. If these are neglected, the energy expended upon country places will be, as regards the nation, of very little avail."

Should we do our part, it requires especial agencies and especial means to effect a good and satisfactory work. The same plan that would succeed in an old and regular congregation would not be calculated to succeed here. More singing, shorter prayers, and shorter addresses are advisable. Above all, at such meetings, the various truths should be taught boldly, clearly, and even dogmatically. If a speaker have any difficulties upon a point of doctrine, let him think them out at home. For in his mission room he should declare only such beliefs as he honestly and earnestly acknowledges to be true in his heart of hearts. If a man speaks in an apologetic and half-hearted manner, speaking as if he did not quite believe what he says, he will have few followers. The most successful preachers are those who utter with all boldness the unsearchable riches of Christ. Believing themselves, they make others believe, and catch their zeal, warmth, and earnestness.

* * * *

The Home Missionary Society is well adapted to promote evangelistic work. Many are the now flourishing churches which once received aid from its funds. Many a village church has received assistance and encouragement from it; and has been cheered in its work for Christ, amidst the loss of friends and active toilers who have

been obliged to seek employment in the busy hives of industry Many a minister in his lonely district, whilst doing true evangelistic work, far from our towns and cities, has had his heart warmed, and his labour lightened, by the assistance of the Church-Aid Society, which deserves much more liberal help than it has ever yet received from the Congregational churches of Yorkshire.

Remember our Lord's words "Beginning at Jerusalem," by which we must judge that our first duty in evangelistic work is in our own neighbourhood and our own country. It was only when the disciples were scattered abroad by the persecutions of the Jewish rulers that they went everywhere preaching the Word. It was only when the unbelieving Jews would not hear the Apostle Paul that he turned to the Gentiles. Our first business is, therefore, *Home Missions*. Very important it is that the continent of Europe should be brought to Christ Very important it is that our vast dependency of India, the great empire of China, and other heathen nations should cast off their idolatry, but vastly more important is it that England should be Christian!

Think of our influence in the world as of an empire upon which the sun never sets.

Think of the evil influence of our sailors, the sails of whose ships whiten every sea, and the flags of whose vessels float in every port.

Think of our travellers penetrating to every land, civilized or barbarian. And then think of the vital importance that our people should be Christians.

In arguing on behalf of Evangelistic work in the Churches, we must not forget that our denomination has been a great blessing to the community. Other branches of the Christian church may have excelled us in some things, such as lay preaching and better organization. Nevertheless, if in evangelistic work we extend its influence, we are promoting the good of the people at large. When we build a church or a Sunday school we are doing a work that requires no apology.

Learned writers have told us that in certain crises of our history we have saved our country. We know that a Congregationalist must think for himself, and that if he be a good and useful member of one of our churches he must learn and practise self-reliance, self-control, and self-abnegation. It is much easier to obey a priesthood, or accept without examination certain articles and creeds which have been handed down by fallible men who lived a few hundred years ago. Anyone who examines for himself will obtain a robustness of character and manliness of nature which those who take things at second hand will never possess. It appears as if the battle for the right of private judgment might have to be fought over again. The progress of Romanism, and the rapid spread of Ritualism, which is Popery in disguise, should warn us that we must teach the people a more excellent way.

Every Congregational church that arises in our land is a protest against the common enemy, and he who helps to build or support one is a true patriot. Therefore, as lovers of your country, as the friends of freedom, we appeal to you to use your best influence and most active exertion to help in evangelistic work.

But as we said in the commencement, there is a higher ground than this. If Christianity is not evangelistic it is nothing! True Christianity is trying to impart the saving knowledge of the truth as it is in Christ to others who know it not. The last command of our Lord is as binding to us as it was to His disciples. One portion of our world lies around us in the streets and lanes of our cities, and in the villages of our land. The influence of England is so great in the earth that if we make it Christian we shall be helping to make the whole world Christian likewise. Make Englishmen sober, industrious, honest, peaceful, truthful, and God-fearing, and who can tell the example we shall be to other nations?

In evangelistic work we endeavour in some small way to reform the state of society, and thereby make it more Christ-like.

Be it ours to help on this good and noble work by all the means in our power. Then can we say with the poet in his "Ode to Britain."

"So may thy wealth and power increase,
So may thy people dwell in peace.
On thee the Almighty's glory rest;
And all the world in Thee be blest.

J. A. CLAPHAM.

THE DYING PHILOSOPHER.

"Give me a great thought that I may be refreshed."—*Dying Words of Herder.*

'TWAS in the beauteous German land—
An eve of balmy June,
When nature's pulse to happy hearts
Kept rhythmed time and tune.
When silence threw its holy spell
O'er vale and mountain-crest,
And slumber with its Lethean balm
Had lulled the world to rest.

In this high, starry noon of night
An angel cleaves the air,
And waits, upon its upward flight,
A passing soul to bear.
A sage is dying. Furrowed brow,
White locks and dim eyes say
That kindly heaven his lease of life
Has lengthened many a day.

"No more to me," he whispering says,
"These earthly potions bring,
My life they can no longer stay,
Nor ease my suffering.
Give me a thought, a noble thought,
That may refresh my soul,
And lend new strength to breast the tide
Whose waters round me roll.

Let it be some great, deathless truth
That heaven-taught bard or seer
Has learned from God, who truth reveals
To those He holds most dear."
Then on that failing ear there fell,
In accents sweet and low,
The holiest thought, the loftiest truth
Angels or men may know:

"I heard a voice, 'Blest are the dead,
They who die in the Lord:
Henceforth they from their labours rest,
And great is their reward.'"
Borne upward on those winged, blest words,
This spirit not of earth
Passed to the land where all high thought
And sacred truth has birth.

—*Interior.*

JAMES HERBERT'S DIARY;

Or, Experiences with Seekers after God.

By the Rev. ROBERT TUCK, B.A., Author of "Netley Independent Chapel," "Links Wanted," &c.

V.—HOPELESSLY HARDENED.

IN one of my conversations with my friend Herbert, he told me of his extreme anxiety about a man who had backslidden in a way that made him fear lest he should never be renewed again unto repentance; and though this case is hardly one of a seeker after God, yet it so well represents the perils

of an imperfect conversion-time, and the evil influence of inconsistent Christians upon earnest inquirers, that I give it a place in this series of extracts. Herbert had written the story, as was his wont, not only to detail the facts, but to give also some expression to his thoughts in the review of them.

"In my first charge, at Tilburstow, I had the most painful experience of my ministerial life. Even yet it lies as a sore and heavy burden on my heart, and finds a place in my prayers. In it I proved helpless. It was one of those experiences that put a new solemnity on pastoral life, shake one's own confidences, and give the soul a great fear lest even the reach of the Divine Mercy should prove too short for some men.

"George Attley was converted, as he thought, and as we hoped, at some revival services that were held at Tilburstow. There was a good deal of aroused feeling, and many were carried into a religious profession on the flood-tide. Some of them remain to this day among the 'steadfast and immoveable,' who are 'always abounding in the work of the Lord;" but in Attley's case the feeling soon faded, and only a strong self-will kept him maintaining a Christian profession. Scarcely realising that there was in him no divinely quickened life, he yet felt that he had begun a religious profession, and he was determined to go through with it. He prided himself upon doing *well* whatever he undertook, and he was going in for a religious life with all his might.

"He became one of the most zealous workers, both in the Church and in the school; in a little time being made a deacon and a superintendent. He was a self-reliant man; very proud of the worldly position he had made by his own exertions, and of his business honour; energetic, determined, almost dogged; not naturally good-tempered, and rather disposed to bear malice. His energy made things go well in the school, but I often questioned with myself whether, in his work, there was not more sign of *force* than of *life*. Everything he did—prayer, address, counsel, work—had a strained-up feeling about it, as if he were *trying* to be a Christian, and do a Christian's work, rather than being a Christian, and doing Christian work, because he could not help it; the life in him must get manifestation.

"I checked all suspicious and anxious thoughts, and hoped I was mistaken in my character-reading, for I knew how very searchingly life—God's present-time 'consuming fire'—as it passes on, brings testings for all who do not hold religion with a soul-grip. Life presently tries our anchor-hold, and if it be only 'determination of will,' then there is grave reason to fear that, in the day of storm, the anchor will drag. Nothing stands, in life's evil day, but the true heart-hold; straining against *that* even 'the gates of hell cannot prevail.'

"There was a man, in Tilburstow, who was very prominent in the religious world, but not connected with any church. He made great efforts to become friendly with George Attley, and so very loud was his religious profession that no sinister motives could be for a

moment suspected. He was in a related branch of business in Cheap Street, and made out that he was doing very well. In reality he was close upon the verge of bankruptcy, and, to save himself, he persuaded Attley to unite the two businesses, when they would be able to carry all before them.

"Attley and he joined partnership, under the title of Ford and Attley, and for a short time all went on well. Then, private things came out about Ford. He squandered money in evil practices. He became reckless; over-bought and over-trusted; brought the business to ruin, and dragged Attley's fair business name in the mire. According to the rules of the Church, Attley was required to resign his offices as deacon and superintendent, and even his church-membership was suspended. Poor Attley! The fair creation of success, and of character, lay all about him, blown down like a house of cards.

"He was not a meek man, so the trouble proved overwhelming. The bulrush bends before the gale and rises again; the stout tree lies helplessly where it has fallen. His partner had made a great profession of religion, and Attley's dogged disposition led him to take up a fierce opposition to religion, as if *it* had proved the cause of his ruin and disgrace. He openly said: 'I served God faithfully and earnestly and this is His reward; then no more religion for me.' He became hard, utterly hard. It was not a case of intellectual difficulty; it was not a case of heart-crushedness. I knew by Attley's state what Pharaoh's 'hardened heart' means, and what Paul intended by his expression, 'given over to Satan.'

"I did my utmost for him; saw him again and again, tried every way of approaching and influencing him that I could think of; but I must not repeat the bitter things he said, with a coldness and hardness which made my heart ache for him. This is the sum of his talk: 'Look at that man! He is one of your saints. He has dragged my honour in the dust; brought down the whole building of my life about my ears. Now, I don't want to grieve you by saying strong things; but, once for all, Mr. Herbert, I have tried religion, and don't like it, and have no intention of having any more to do with it. I have served the Lord, and this is His reward. Now I am going to serve the world, and see if it can do any better for me.'

"So he did. With characteristic energy, as soon as he was free from his entanglements, he set to work to gather up his business, and began again in a way that meant demanding success; but he gave up entirely all connection with religion. He ceased to attend worship, or even to keep the Sabbath. As soon as he got on a little, he hired a conveyance and took his family out into the country to spend the Sunday. He commenced attending the theatre; joined a tradesman's club at the 'White Hart,' and, in fact, flung himself headlong into a gay, worldly life.

"What he felt most deeply was the sinister bar that lay across his business honour. The feeling our fathers had about business failures has almost faded away; but I have known men who could

face death more readily than bankruptcy, and who laid their lives under burdens rather than shirk responsibilities which bankruptcy would have easily cleared. Attley worked day and night, he kept personal and family expenses well in hand, and, before many years had passed, he paid every creditor of the partnership in full, and had the joy unspeakable of clearing his sullied name.

"But he *did it himself*. So far as his own view of things went, God had not helped him at all. He kept hardened, all the more hardened, because, by himself, he had succeeded.

"And then he became reckless. It seemed as if the service of this world paid him, and he had yet to learn how the world first pats and praises its servants, and then whips them until they are 'full of wounds and bruises.' One Sunday he had been into the country, and had taken more drink than was good for him. On the return journey he so worried the horse that it became nervous and unsteady, and, as Attley was getting up into the trap at the half-way house, the horse started and Attley fell heavily over the wheel and broke his leg.

"I had long been watching for my opportunity of getting an influence upon him, and now it seemed to have come. I went to him at the hospital, where he was first carried; I saw him every few days, for about three months, at his own home. But I could get no access to him. His experience had trodden the path of his heart so hard that the seeds of truth, of sympathy, of persuasion, only lay on it bare and dry. He was always polite. He would let me read the Bible, coldly saying, 'It pleases you, and I don't mind.' He would not let me pray with him; and he put aside all my pleadings and argument, by saying, again and again, 'Look here, Mr. Herbert, I don't want God. I don't like his service. It doesn't pay.'

"Poor George Attley! Many a time I brought a sore heart away from these visits. It seemed as if I must think of him as 'twice dead, as one of those who are described in such fearful terms by the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews,—'For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame.'

"I could but pray for him; and, remembering the special promise to united prayer, I induced some of Attley's old Christian friends and fellow-workers to join me in prayer for him; but, when I left Tilburstow, Attley was as hardened as ever. I believe he is still alive, and still a backslider. But I have not lost hope concerning him. God can even reach that bitter, hardened heart. His life is not done yet, and so I pray still, and God knows what a great longing to see His mercy finally triumphant goes forth in my words as I say, 'O God of the long stretching-hand, I beseech Thee, reach, humble, save, poor, hardened George Attley.'"

SACRED STREAMS.

WE have received, from Messrs. Hodder & Stoughton, "Sacred Streams," being a new and revised edition of Mr. P. H. Gosse's well-known work on the Ancient and Modern History of the Rivers of the Bible. The author, realising the pleasant associations which cluster round our rivers, has evidently often mused on the varied scenes and characters with which some of them have been connected in bygone ages. With

this idea before him, he has gathered round the sacred streams of Palestine, Egypt, and Babylon those associations with which Holy Writ has made us so conversant. Thus he says, "Not a rill or river but has some story to tell, some lesson to teach, some song of praise to elicit, in lands where angels talked with men, where inspired poets sang, where prophets and seers unfolded the far-distant future, where the visible glory of God dwelt, where the arm of Jehovah was ever stretched out in blessing, deliverance, protection, or chastisement; where patriarchs sojourned, and where, for a while, tabernacled Jesus, the glorious 'Word made flesh.'"

That Mr. Gosse has done his work well goes without saying. The first edition was published in 1850, and the present one has been revised in accordance with those facts which the progress of knowledge, during more than a quarter of a century, has brought to light. It is illustrated by a map and nearly fifty engravings, one of which, illustrating the environs of ancient Babylon, we give on the previous page. There is a useful index, as well as a list of texts illustrated, quoted, or alluded to, thus adding to the value of the work, which Sunday-school teachers will find most helpful.

ADDRESSES TO YOUNG CONGREGATIONALISTS.

II.—JOINING A CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH.

THE religion of Jesus Christ is like other callings in this respect—its most proficient disciples are those who enter its training school early in life. This is such a natural inference from the conditions of the Christian life, as well as from our observations of human affairs in general, that we expect no difficulty in the way of its sincere acceptance. We are first and in a special sense "babes" in the Gospel; we grow towards the standard of manhood revealed to us in Christ Jesus. There is gradual development in time. The earlier we commence, the more progress we can reasonably hope to make during our natural lives. Time and opportunity are, therefore, all in favour of early discipleship.

But that is not all its advantages. We learn more easily during early life than during any later period. We are more recipient and more retentive of facts during our youth. Those who have neglected mastering the rudiments of the ordinary branches of knowledge while young have to pay the price of increased toil when endeavouring later in life to make up for lost time. The faculties have lost their suppleness, their fresh, sensitive, recipient quality. The man striving to train his now stiff fingers to touch the strings of the violin with meaning nimbleness, the man trying to impress upon an untrained and dull memory the inflexions of a classical language, the man newly trying to train his eye to see and his hand to delineate the forms and expressions of life or scenes of natural

beauty, must one and all confess that they suffer the penalty of lost opportunities. Yet not greater than he who, when ungodly habits have grown upon him, when the fine faculties of the soul have become callous, when the tone of life has become worldly and selfish, when the sentiments of the heart have become insipid, seeks then to attain to the strength and firmness of character, the tender spiritual power, the rejoicing faith, the vision, the intuition of the mature saint of God.

It is, therefore, at your peril, young friends, that you postpone to some indefinite period of life the settlement of the Momentous Question. Supposing that you do not, as so many do, settle that question never, you are, by procrastination, deliberately choosing for yourselves an inferior type of spiritual development, an inferior place in the general assembly of the First-Born. The trees of the Lord that are full of sap and green, that bring forth their fruit in their season, are those that have been planted as mere saplings in the courts of the Lord.

It comes like cordial to my heart, as I am writing these lines, to assume that many of you who chance to read them, and are yet in the blossoming season of youth, have in your secret hearts accepted God's offer of salvation, and know what it is to pray in the name of Christ believingly. But you shyly shrink from any confession of your faith, from any act which outwardly registers your inwardly acknowledged relation to the Saviour. Open now your "Manual of Congregational Principles," and read the demonstration of its First Principle: "*It is the Will of Christ that all those who believe in Him should be organised into churches.*"

You see it is not a matter of choice, of inclination, or of expediency whether you join the Church of Christ or not. It is the "Will of Christ," and to you no commandment can be so august and peremptory.

No sooner do you of holy purpose participate in the benefits of Christ's atonement for sin than you discover that you have relinquished the selfish ordering of your lives. What has hitherto presented itself to your mind as a gracious Gospel privilege is now re-stated in terms of duty. Rights and duties are convertible terms expressing relationship. And it is your honourable obligation to strengthen the Church of Christ by joining its ranks. Christ did not die for you alone: He died for the whole world. Have you no personal interest in seeing that colossal purpose of mercy increasingly fulfilled? And is it not proved to you convincingly that that purpose, by Divine ordination, is to be carried out through the agency of Christian Churches? How can you, therefore, stand aloof?

Moreover, you will naturally desire to become a full-grown man in Christ. You need spiritual meat and drink, spiritual teaching, spiritual discipline. But you can have them; only go to the gate where God dispenses His benevolences, and that gate is the Christian Church. It is the natural and proper sphere for the exercise and training of your soul. It is the arena where you are to show your

prowess. Your attachment to it will be the seal of your faith; for how beautifully does John say, "We know we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren." Even if you desire, with the admirable generosity of youth, to offer Christ a choice gift, then bend in loving service to the least of His brethren, and in the Book of Remembrance He inscribes, not the "little one," but Himself your debtor.

I love to see young men and women sitting around the Lord's Table. The objective realities of the Eucharist are a great help to faith. Let me quote from your "Manual," at page 144:—

"[The Lord's Supper] recalls to the Church of every age the homeliest elements of Christ's earthly history. Christ wishes to be remembered as having sat at table with His friends; as having had the common physical wants of the race; as having satisfied those wants with the common food of the race. In instituting the Supper our Lord built the life and faith of the Church upon the reality of His Incarnation."

If, then, I understand your especial wants rightly, you want what Dr. Dale reminds you is given us in this sacrament of the Church of Christ. You want to conceive vividly the historic reality of the life of Jesus; to grasp the momentous fact of the Word made flesh which once dwelt amongst us. Realise, then, Christ eating bread such as is here presented to you, and are you not with the Friend in instant imagination in that upper room? The morsel of bread lends wings to the imagination, and focuses our undefined faith upon "the carpenter, the son of Joseph." How real Christ has made it to us. It is like when we take up a sea shell, gathered on some far ocean strand, and place it to our ears: its murmurings help us in fancy to see and hear the resounding waves as they dash upon the shore from whence it was gathered. So does the bread transport us to "the reality of His Incarnation," and the Church of Christ has no indifferent claim upon you that are young and "believe in the Lord" in that it alone can perpetuate this Sacrament.

But agreeing with all I have said, and being determined to obey the Will of Christ in this matter, you are brought to contemplate, not the act of joining any of the Christian Churches to be found in this country, but of joining that particular and scriptural form of a Christian society called a Congregational church. And it is to this I must next ask your attention.

Leytonstone. W. PIERCE.

THE SUM OF IT ALL.

THE boy that by *addition* grows,
And suffers no *subtraction*,
Who *multiplies* the thing he knows,
And carries every *fraction*,
Who well *divides* his precious time,
The due *proportion* giving,
To sure success aloft will climb,
Interest compound receiving.

RAY PALMER.

WHAT MADE THE PRAYER MEETING?

WO things are to be premised. It will be understood that it was the Holy Spirit who blessed the meeting. But the difference between one meeting and another was not because the Spirit was a guest at one and not at another. He is always present, even at the dullest service, waiting to bless. Over every such might be written, "There standeth One among you, whom ye know not." But some one recognised and welcomed the ever-present, and often grieved, guest; and *that* made the prayer meeting.

Here are a batch of notes from the Pastor's note-book:

1. In the background a long series of cold, formal meetings. What made this one throb and glow with spiritual warmth? Simply because a heavy-hearted woman rose and with broken utterance said, "Pray for me." Only three words made that meeting.

2. The meeting opens just as all other meetings. Up to a certain point the ordinary programme is carried out to a minute and second. Deacon Ford doesn't usually take part; but to-night he does. That is, he tries to speak of the preciousness of God's grace in a recent sorrow. But even the first sentence is unfinished, for the heart is too big. Across the billows of that sea all in the room saw Christ come. Don't you think that was "a good meeting?"

3. A new voice blessed this meeting. Young Charles Dale was converted a month ago. He has never taken part, but to-night before service he wrestles with God. From that Peniel he comes to the service. The words he says are few, and perhaps do not amount to much, humanly speaking; but, divinely speaking, all in that service knew that the Spirit was there.

4. People said, "What ails our minister and our deacons to-night?" Never before, this year, had they spoken so briefly and earnestly. Fifteen minutes of prayer by the deacons at the pastor's study did it; at the close of which Deacon French said, "Brethren, suppose we go over to the meeting, and each give a brief, earnest testimony for Christ." Somehow or other everything went well that evening. Surely never was there such singing and such attention.

5. At the afternoon sewing meeting, one young lady said to her companions, "Let us each look up a verse on the subject, and repeat it to-night at the meeting." You would be surprised to know how it freshened up that meeting.

6. Five minutes before the close of the meeting, the pastor said, "Now, let us have fifteen short, ejaculatory prayers, each not more than twenty words long. Do not rise." What prayers those were!

The note-book contains a good deal more, of which these are samples.

S. W. ADRIANCE.

ROSE EASTON.

By M. A. Paull, Author of "Whatsoever," "Tim's Troubles," "Friar Hildebrand's Cross," &c., &c.

Chapter VI.—TWO EXCELLENT OFFERS.

It was two years after the brother ministers had signed the temperance pledge in Saxerby, when Paul Easton entered his cheerful sitting-room one morning, in search of Rose. A rather amused smile rested on his plain, but pleasant face, and he held in his hand an open letter.

Rose, however, he found to his disappointment, was not in the room, but the presence of Walter, Adeline, and Daisy, seemed to imply that she would soon return to them.

"Mamma is not out, is she, my little folks?" he asked cheerily.

"Oh no! she's coming in a minute," said Addy; "she said she would, papa."

"Then there can be no doubt about it, Addy," returned her father, smiling pleasantly at the child's confident tone.

As he waited, he glanced round the room with a sense of satisfaction, that was indeed welcome to him. How many things had been obtained with the money saved from his very moderate use of strong drink! He had put the exact average sum away for the first year, and found at the end that it amounted to just ten pounds. The use of tobacco soon followed, and two pounds more had to be added to the salvage.

Twelve pounds in worse than useless luxuries! It was a great sum. He determined to dedicate it entirely to Rose's comforts the first year, and to their children the second. Of course Rose had her chair, and her enjoyment of it was so great that Paul Easton declared that alone was better than any wine. She had, after this, a new and handsome black silk dress, the first silk dress he had ever given to her. He never thought before that he could possibly afford it. And next finding that he had better consult her, as to his approaching purchase, Paul bought what every good housewife knows becomes absolutely necessary now and then, a number of kitchen requisites, saucepans, jugs, basins, brushes, and cloths, which though all of them exceedingly unromantic, add to or diminish wonderfully the comfort of the mistress of a family.

Then he insisted on "indulging" his wife, as she called it, with a tasteful bonnet, three pairs of gloves, a handsome brush and comb, and because he found he had just the right money left, a delightful work-table. When the children's money was spent the next year, he determined that the destiny of the future savings from intoxicants, should be his wife's private purse. He had had no fortune to settle upon her, and she had had none of her own, she brought with her only a good wardrobe, a few pounds she had earned as a daily governess, perfect health, a sunny temper, and a Christian love and tenderness, and, as he ever recognised, she had been to

him, "worth her weight in gold." Why should he not permit her to have some share of his income to spend as it pleased her?

The parlour, always snug and comfortable, looked very much better than it used to do, for that pretty chair and work-table; and he was conscious that the last two years had been years of greater improvement and blessing in himself, than any such period before. He had had more zeal, more enjoyment in his work. He had been less *headachy*, less nervous, and as a consequence, less irritable. He had looked at life far more cheerfully, more hopefully, and he had worked far harder. That "dreamy sentimental pipe," as he now called it, had certainly not made him inclined for action, nor, as he laughingly told Rose, had it made his sermons any *deeper*, only much more *foggy*.

"Well, Rose darling," he said, as she presently entered, "may these children go up to the nursery for a little, I want to have a talk with you, or will you come to my study?"

"Baby is just off," said Rose, "I can't let them go to the nursery. But they will stay here till I come back again. Walter, I think for a great treat you may have the chess-board and men to play with, you will see they are not broken."

The children gave a little cry of delight, and readily promised to be very, very careful of these treasures. It was the first time they had ever used them as toys, without Hal or Isabel being present, and they were quite charmed with this trust, and made no objection whatever to being left to themselves for awhile longer, even at an hour when their mother, having cared for her baby, generally superintended their amusements as she worked.

"You have a letter you want to read to me dear?" said Rose, when they were in the study.

"I have to ask you a question first," he remarked.

"Something has happened," said Rose, reading his face.

"Something, dear love," he replied, "is always happening."

"Yes; but something very particular, I mean," Rose said.

"The question is, Rose, are you ready to leave Saxerby?"

"Leave Saxerby!" exclaimed Rose Easton. "Oh! Paul, you are not in earnest; are you? Think of all your work, dear, and of what I am trying to do!"

"But can you not work somewhere else, and cannot I preach?"

"Yes, you *could*, and so could I. But then I am so interested in so many individual cases amongst these poor women of all classes, and I have planned so many things—but then, of course," she added, in an altered tone, "if it is a really right thing to leave Saxerby, it must be done. Do tell me what you mean, dear, for you have puzzled me very much?"

"How would an additional hundred a-year do, Rose? Why it would free you from anxiety, my dear, and make us rich in your estimation."

"If it is only a question of money, dearest Paul, neither you nor I will choose to leave Saxerby for money. But do you really mean that you have had a call elsewhere?"

"I am not so sure about the 'call,' I have had a cordial invitation. Read it for yourself;" and he placed the letter he held, in her hands.

It was impossible for her to read it without sincere pleasure, and combined with the pleasure was considerable surprise. It was a hearty and unanimous invitation from a London church to her husband. It stated frankly, that it was in a certain sense, a mission church, and that the known capacity of himself and his wife in dealing with difficult drink cases, was one reason why they now sought him. The stipend offered was a house to live in, and a hundred pounds a year more than the chapel at Saxerby could afford to pay.

"The house rent saved would, I take it, balance the greater cost of London living, so we should have an increase of a clear hundred." said Paul. "You see you are included in the invitation, Rose; what a thing it is," he added mischievously, "to be a prominent lady."

"I can't imagine how they know anything about me," said Rose. "I have never done anything to be known about."

"You do not guess where your reformed ones may have gone, nor what influence they may have. There was that poor lady, Mrs. Berry, who went to London to her husband, after having left him for so long."

"Many have gone to London," said Rose, "yet it is strange indeed to find that such little matters get spread in this fashion. But let us come back to the subject itself. You will not leave Saxerby? Oh! I think it would be unkind to do it. You said the other day, that you believed they gave you as much as they could afford. And they are such a fine, earnest set of men and women, and all work so happily together and with you. Dear husband, I cannot see how it can be any one's duty, *merely for money*, to leave a sphere where God has so blessed his labours as He has yours in this town. And especially lately, as you said yourself, the working men are beginning to know you and to trust you as their friend, one with them in trying to give up all bad habits that can possibly impede your usefulness or their own. I can make do with our present income, if you are prepared to stay."

"Then I had better tell my deacons," said Paul demurely, "and let them know what a chance I have had." Paul Easton did not look at Rose, as he said this, he knew that if he did, she must have seen a merry glance in his eyes, and would have understood at once.

"Oh! Paul; don't you think that would be ungenerous?" said Rose, very gently, "Why make them unhappy, and perhaps unsettled, if you have made up your mind to stay with them? And I hope you have," she added.

"But don't you understand, Rose, that if they heard of this, they might find my true value—our true value, they might know henceforth what a tremendous bargain they have in getting us at the price, and be prepared to give us due consideration and respect."

Rose laughed, patted her husband's shoulder, and looked into his face.

"You naughty man," she said, "I almost began to believe you were in earnest in all that conceited talk. I beg your pardon, Paul, I ought to have heard it was fun."

"Dear Rose," he rejoined, "I am so glad that we are of one mind so thoroughly in this matter also. I am well persuaded that it *is* our duty to stay here, where we are both so useful. God is giving us souls for our hire. But I wonder," he added, laughing, "what Alice would say if she knew that the plain matter-of-fact Paul Easton had been invited to London before her handsome, poetic, eloquent Peter?"

"You must not laugh at Alice, Paul; there is a great deal to admire in her. She has quite a business tact, and helps me very much indeed in the Home."

The "Home" was an institution set on foot by Rose Easton, and it embraced quite a number of useful plans and purposes, as it called forth a very great deal of thought and care and tact from its foundress. When she had begun to realise that she had a not inconsiderable influence over drink-cursed women, both in the richer and poorer classes of society, she was, of course, exceedingly anxious to use it to the utmost extent of her ability. One great difficulty, especially with those reformed in the educated classes, was to find philanthropic work for them, which should have a tendency to strengthen their good resolutions, and also, if possible, to make them actually see the pit from which they had been digged. It was this conviction, joined to the fact that she had two very interesting cases under her care at the same time in very opposite outward positions, which led to the Home.

She proposed to the wealthy dipsomaniac who had now solemnly promised to abstain, to visit and assist in the reformation of a young woman, the wife of an artisan, who was bringing destruction upon her home, and ruining her husband's comfort.

The experiment answered completely; the lady was horrified to find how ugly drunkenness was in another, and watched over her erring sister with the utmost solicitude, giving an amount of time to her case that Rose could not possibly have done herself.

This lady was henceforth one of Rose's chief aids in every respect. She was wealthy, and she gladly carried out and furnished the means for Rose's scheme. A house was taken of moderate size, in a quiet street where rents were low; it was neatly and cheerfully furnished. In it any who were honestly endeavouring to keep firm to their temperance pledge and had no other residence so free from temptation, were at liberty to reside, for a period of three months, making such payments as they could afford, and accepting different classes of entertainment. All pledged themselves to look after each other, and to keep each other from the drink. Various amusements and many recreations were indulged in freely. Rose was alive to the fact that when a woman has voluntarily given up the evil habit, perhaps of years, it is well that some mental stimu-

lant should absorb the thought and enliven the fancy, particularly in the first few months till the reform is well grounded, by a return to purer tastes and habits, and a more natural appetite for food succeeds to the horrible craving for drink.

In the Home, music played an important part, the educated musicians, teaching the art to wholly unskilled novices, with much kindness and patience; singing, and all kinds of games, fancy needlework, wholesome fiction, and cookery filled up many hours. Two of the inmates at a time, visited frequently the women who were trying to reform outside of the Home. There was a well attended mothers' meeting, conducted by the boarders for these; and through all, gently and lovingly, the spirit of Rose Easton permeated, bringing a kind and sweet and abiding influence for good. She had a power much more rare than that of being able to do good work yourself. She could set others to do good work.

Some women stayed very many months in the Home. That anxious mistrust of their own power to keep faithful to their promise, unless they depended moment by moment upon One "who is mighty to save," made them hesitate to leave surroundings so favourable to their "continuance in well-doing," and Rose saw a probable future of even much extended usefulness in this establishment. But she was surprised that the fame of her modest enterprise had reached the metropolis.

The very thought of leaving Saxerby now made her cling all the more to the labour in which she was engaged. She went in and out of the Home, and had those helpful interviews with its inmates separately, to which they all ascribed so much good, with ever deepening interest. Here, in truth, God had given her, not only the sweet home duties, but a privilege of spiritual sisterhood to other women, for which she felt she could not be too thankful. However grateful they were, and many of them were enthusiastic in their love for her, she felt that she had also reason to thank them, that, in thus "watering others," she was herself also "watered."

Alice Gromer, in the outside work of the Home, and at the mothers' meetings, had made herself very useful. She was so pretty, so bright, so vivacious, that her visits were exceedingly welcome; but it was to Rose all turned for advice in perplexity, for comfort in distress, for help at all times.

"I must come in with you, Rose," said Alice Gromer, meeting Rose just outside her own door, about a fortnight after Paul had refused the offer from the London church. "Something *so* delightful has happened."

"I am very glad to hear it," said Rose warmly.

"Peter has had a call to London," said Alice triumphantly, "and though it isn't exactly the kind of church I should have liked, one can't have quite everything I suppose. At all events, it *is* London, and then he will be in the high road for something better still."

"Have you, then, determined to go, Alice?" asked Rose, in a somewhat regretful tone. "I shall miss you very much, dear."

"O! yes, thank you, Rose; but you know that can't be helped. I feel so pleased that I always predicted Peter would be wanted in London. Of course," she added, "you must not mind my saying this, because Mr. Easton is so different."

Rose found it difficult to help smiling suspiciously, and perhaps a not unnatural wifely pleasure crept into her heart, that if Paul did not go to London, it was not because he was not "wanted" there, but because he thought he had a higher duty elsewhere. She rather wished she could have told Alice of the offer Paul had had—she would hardly have been human if the temptation had not come to her—but she refrained.

"I'm so glad of it," continued Alice, "because even if Peter should decide to stay (but I feel sure he won't), it would of course enable him to ask an increased salary, and it would just show these deacons here, and the whole congregation, how much they ought to appreciate and prize him. If we don't go, it will be because Peter does not quite like the kind of church in London; the gentleman who writes calls it a mission church. But even if this is refused by Peter, we shall get a nice increase here, and then the right sort of metropolitan church is sure to want him at some time."

Rose told Paul, and the husband and wife were considerably amused.

Peter, guided by Alice, went rather skilfully to work. He told the deacons of the offer he had had, and of his doubt about accepting it. He hinted that the larger salary offered the minister in London was a question of importance to him, with his children's future to think of.

But his deacons were not so aghast at the idea of his leaving them as he expected them to be. One expressed the belief that they were not prepared to offer anything like the London terms. Another thought that as the opening *had* come, it might show the hand of the Lord pointing to another sphere. A third hinted that he had observed a little restlessness in both Mr. and Mrs. Gromer in regard to Saxerby.

Peter had some trouble to communicate all this to Alice, without exciting her anger. As it was, she flushed, and begged him to write at once and accept the mission church.

But her mortifications were not to end at Saxerby. She was hardly settled in her London home, when a lady who was almost a deacon in disguise, so active was she in church matters, begged to know whether Mrs. Gromer was acquainted with a minister at Saxerby called Paul Easton, and Rose, his wife. Alice answered as became her nature, speaking of them both as very amiable, very useful, but by no means especially attractive.

"Ah! my dear Mrs. Gromer," said Miss Meddel, "we were *so* anxious to have them here; but they absolutely refused. Mrs. Easton appears to be so very much blessed in her work at Saxerby. I hear it would be considered quite a public loss if they left that town."

THE END.

THE TEACHERS' PAGE.

INTERNATIONAL LESSONS FOR JULY.

WE now begin a series of lessons concerned with the history of the Divided Kingdom, beginning with the foolishness of Rehoboam, and ending with some of the prophecies sent to encourage the captives in Babylon.

On first looking at this list, teachers and parents may think that the lessons cannot fail to be interesting, seeing that they are so full of incident. We should not wonder if they proved to be unusually difficult, seeing that they demand very careful study and preparation, and very much watchfulness of ourselves, if their more important moral and spiritual teachings are to be brought out. It is quite possible for us to interest children in the narrative and historical Scriptures, without exerting on them any permanent and gracious influence. Only as our own minds and hearts are quick to observe spiritual meanings and suggestion, shall we be able to deal with this series wisely and efficiently.

The lessons provide us with quite a number of *character studies*, and they are more suitable for grown folk than for children. Still, there are plain warnings and examples in such men as Rehoboam, the ill-advised; Jeroboam, who tried to force God's will into his own way; Omri, who, because he succeeded against human enemies, tried hard to prevail against Jehovah; Ahab, who let another mind rule his; and Elijah, who, in the fear of God, was found fearless of man; which can be easily explained to and impressed upon children. These are the individuals introduced to us in this month's lessons.

But teachers and parents ought more especially to aim at teaching the methods of the Divine dealing with men, and with nations, and more especially with men and nations that are *in sin*. In the four subjects for this month we see God working the judgment of sin in the ordinary course of providence; by the foolishness and the self-will of the sinner himself; and by raising up men whose very success becomes a scourge.

In the first two lessons, those on Rehoboam and Jeroboam, we have forcible illustration of this truth—God punishes sin by letting the sinner run into more and deeper sin. This is seen in Rehoboam, whose heedlessness of God led on to the sin and folly of neglecting the wise men, and trusting to young and self-willed companions. It is seen in Jeroboam, whose masterfulness led on to putting Jehovah to public dishonour by making calf-representations of Him. It may be shown in David, whose first sin led on to deception and murder. It may be brought home to children, by reminding them how, when they do wrong, they are led on to try to hide it with deception and lies. Further, sin is the dreadful whip with which oftentimes our first sins are punished.

From Omri and Ahab we learn the peril that lies in material prosperity that is not rooted in God. Civilisation is not the true glory of a nation; nor is knowledge; only *righteousness* exalteth a nation. There is no stability in any progress that has not, at the heart of it, faith in God. It is but the prosperity of Omri.

From Ahab we get the opportunity of very serious teachings on the peril of evil companionships, and can impress, especially on those at the threshold of life, the solemn warning, "Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers." Ahab shows us how true it is that "the companion of fools (evil ones) shall be destroyed."

We shall have future opportunity for studying the character of Elijah and the lessons of his life: now we only deal with the judgment which came upon the nation in consequence of the national iniquity, which the king and queen led. That enables us to teach the children that national calamity is still God's judgment on nations. William Jay, of Bath, used to say, "God can punish individuals in this life and in the next; but He can only punish *nations* in this life." What we have to impress on the children is, that God's dealings with nations are His great picture-teachings of the ways in which He deals with individuals, even with us. He never lets sin go unpunished; and His divine law for persons and for nations is this, "Them that honour Me, I will honour, and those that depise Me shall be lightly esteemed."

ROBERT TUCK.

THE TWO HOMES.

TWO HOMES.

I KNOW a little leafy bower
Where may and blackthorn are in flower,
And there, half hid from sight,
Two little birds have made their nest,
And, sun or shade, content they rest,
And think the whole world bright.

I know a little cottage home,
Where sweetest of sweet roses roam,
And there, half hid from sight,
Two loving hearts have made their nest,
And, sun or shade, content they rest,
And think the whole world bright.

SIGNING AWAY SALVATION.

IT was in a country store one evening. A number of young men were sitting together about the stove, telling what they didn't believe, and what they were not afraid to do. Finally, the leader in the group remarked that, so far as he was concerned, he would be willing at any time to sign away all his interest in Christ for a five-dollar bill.

"What did I understand you to say?" asked an old farmer, who happened to overhear the remark.

"I said that for five dollars I would sign away all my interest in Christ, and so I will."

The old farmer, who had learned to know the human heart pretty well, drew out his leathern wallet, took therefrom a ten dollar bill and put it in the storekeeper's hand. Then, calling for ink and paper, he said: "My young friend, if you will just step to the desk now and write as I direct, the money is yours."

The young man took the pen and began: "In the presence of these witnesses, I, A—— B——, for the sum of ten dollars received, do now, once for all and forever, sign away all my interest"—then he dropped the pen and with a forced smile said, "*I take it back, I was only fooling.*"

That young man did not dare to sign that paper. Why? He had an accusing conscience. He knew that there was a God. He believed in religion. He meant to be a Christian some time.

And so, dear reader, it may be with you. Notwithstanding your apparent indifference, you would not to-day for ten thousand dollars sign away, if such a thing were possible, your interest in Jesus Christ. You do not desire or expect to lose heaven.

But what you would not for anything do in one way, you may truly and surely do in another. Many a man who would not commit suicide will throw away his life in fragments. To drift on indifferently without a Saviour, day by day and year after year, is as surely to be lost as if you were to-day to sell your soul to the devil. All that you need to do in order to be lost is to do nothing. How shall we escape if we *neglect?*

C. D. CRANE.

A SUNDAY LECTURE ON "MISSIONS."

THE moving spectacle recently witnessed at Exeter Hall, of a band of young men, alumni of a famous university, numbering among them names familiar as household words amongst English athletes, all of them men of position and prospects, taking leave of their friends and fellow-countrymen to go as Missionaries to China, is a thing to be noted both by the Church and the world. People who have not hitherto been given to the study of religious matters have been drawn, spite of themselves, to look at this phenomenon. The occasion presents a favourable opportunity for discussing the whole question of Missionary work. I want to do it in a broad and unconventional spirit, I wish to bring in considerations from other than what are called theological quarters. I am afraid a good deal of what people hear from the pulpit is thought of by them as a kind of Sunday argument which will do very well for the place and the occasion, but which, looked at from the standpoint of Tuesday or Wednesday, and of their offices in the City, has not much in it. But I want you to see that this Missionary aspect of the Church's work has got in it the argument which will bear looking at from any standpoint you like. I will take the matter, then, first on the ground of ordinary reason and of every-day consideration. After that, we can climb a little, to considerations not contrary to the world's prudence, but higher.

Beginning in this way, we will first look one or two earnest objections to work of this kind.

It is said, for instance, "These people, amongst whom you plant missions, have religions of their own, which have some very good points in them, and have served their turn for many ages. Why not let them alone?" And here it may be said, we have reached a new era in our knowledge of their faiths and creeds. A new science has been born, the science of comparative religion. By the labours of scholars of our own and other countries, we have had brought before us, as was never the case before, the religious literature of the whole world. The Koran is on our bookshelves. We are familiar with the Maxims of Confucius. The Shasters of Hinduism, the Zend Avesta of the Parsees are open to the reading world, and of late a series of intensely interesting books have brought vividly before us the morality and theology of Buddhism. People say that in some of these religions there is a great deal of good. No doubt there is. Indeed, one is delighted to see the pure and elevated sentiments which many of these writings contain. But the Bible would lead us to expect that. You find everywhere texts in its pages to the effect that vital truths and real revelations from God might be looked for amongst people away from its own line of inspiration. Melchizedek is recognised by Abraham as a messenger of God. He is an outsider, however; Balaam, too, is a true prophet, but not of Israel's line. And when you

come to Gospel times, you never get the Apostles going on the assumption that the people to whom they went knew nothing about truth or about God. Why, the Jews had a magnificent revelation from God, and yet Paul thought it worth his while to go to the ends of the earth to preach Christ to them. And when he went to the heathen he quoted their own poets as witnesses to the truth about God. In the Early Church, such men as Justin Martyr, Origen and Clement of Alexandria—men who hazarded their lives for Christ's sake—were eager to express their recognition of the degree in which outside people had received enlightenment from God. They expressly say that such men as Socrates and Plato got their wisdom from the spirit of Christ, the Logos, in them. But here is the point. Because these people have got something from God, is that any reason why His larger and more glorious revelation should be kept back? And, moreover, if any of you have read dispassionately any of this literature of Brahminism, Buddhism, or Mohamedanism, have you had any difficulty in arriving at a conclusion as to its worth in comparison with what we have in the Gospel of Christ? We will thank God for anything good they have already received, but oh! there is something better waiting for them yet!

Another objection has been urged, and with great acrimony by some writers, who say they have been to certain places and have found that the result of mission work has been to introduce confusion amongst the people, and make matters appear rather worse than they were before. Now, supposing for a moment we were to admit this; supposing we took for granted that these people had covered the whole field of observation; supposing we forgot what others have seen, where, as a first result of this work, cannibal islands, in which aforetime a shipwrecked crew would have been sure of being eaten, have now become as safe to land in as the port of London (and a great deal safer); supposing we forgot all this, and admitted the opposite contention. What would it amount to? Why, what we knew before, viz., that first steps taken by a people in their upward progress are generally awkward steps. The first steps in cultivation often seem to spoil a country. You come to a region which has never been touched by the hand of man. It is a wild woodland scene, a trackless forest, whose mysteries and solemn silences have a grandeur all their own. Next year you revisit the spot, and you find a settler has commenced operations there. He has taken a plot of the land, put a fence round it, cut down some trees, whose stumps are still in the ground. He has sown a patch with corn which is struggling into existence, and he has put up a log hut which is assuredly without form or comeliness. What says the critic to all this? He may be very severe on it if he likes. He seems to have an excellent case. The man has defiled Nature's sanctuary, says he. It has now lost its wild beauty and it has gained no other. Quite true, but wait a while. The country is not spoilt. It is on its way to a higher beauty: from that of savage wilderness to that of high cultivation; from the desert to the garden. The parallel holds in the region of human cultivation. You may

get confusion at first, not peace but a sword, fermentations which seem to contrast unfavourably with former stagnation. But is a wise man afraid of this? It is the inevitable process through which life moves on to higher life. When the bright light shines on a people who have for ages sat in darkness, what wonder, if for a while they may stumble as though dazzled and blinded by it. By and by their vision will adapt itself to the higher condition, and they will walk as children of the light and of the day.

But we must not content ourselves with answering objections. We must advance into the field, and show you positive reasons why this work must go on. For instance, if any one says to us, "Why can't you let the heathen alone?" we answer, The question has come too late. We as a nation have not let the heathen alone. The past cannot reverse itself, and we are already so mixed up with heathen people as to have increased enormously our responsibility in relation to them. When we think, for instance, of India and China, we have before us heathen populations numbering more than one-third of the human race. Let the heathen alone! Well, we have not let these people alone. As to India, we have sent them our military enterprises, shaken down their old governments, and brought everything under our own control. As to China, we have compelled the people there, by force of arms, to open their ports to receive opium which we grow in India, and by the sale of which in China we get a revenue which helps us to pay the expenses of our Indian government. Let them alone! That has been our fashion of letting them alone. And that is not all. In these places of our dominion and influence, we have some, bearing the English name, who have carried with them all the vices of our European life. They have been, so far as their personal influence extended, agents of corruption and impurity. They have not let the heathen alone. They have done their best, or their worst, to lower them. Has, then, the Christian Church nothing to say in this condition of things? Why, if it were only to redress the balance in this matter, to let these people have exported to them something of justice, philanthropy, and love, as a makeweight against the iniquities that have been practised in our name, there is an imperative call for the voice of our genuine Christianity to be heard in these regions. We have sent to these lands much that is wrong, we have sent them specimens of our very worst. Shall we not send them specimens of our best?

But there is another reason why this "let alone" policy can never hold. "Let alone" is contrary to all the laws of life. All live things propagate themselves. All centres of force work outwards and influence other things. Tell the sun to lock up his light and heat and keep it to himself. What business has he to be interfering beyond his own diameter, and to be throwing waves of light and heat across the spaces that perhaps have not asked for them? A vain question. The sun is bound by the law of his own nature. He is full of these forces and must ray them forth. Come nearer home. Take this nation of ours. It is a centre of force,

and it can no more keep that to itself than the sun can. Ask our commerce to keep itself to itself. No! Wherever, in farthest Ind or remotest Thibet, it can find a customer there it will go. Ask our science to interfere with nobody outside? It is an impossibility. An invention, a new discovery, is a missionary at once. It goes forth and converts people all over the world to its own idea. Now, if our religion is a real live thing, as live and real a thing as our commerce and our science, do you not think it will obey the same law? It must. Wherever men have found Christ they can no more keep the secret to themselves than the sun can keep his secret. Now the case as regards our nation is that, as it possesses centres of commercial force, of scientific force, which all act, and cannot help acting, over the whole world, so have we in this land, in the providence of God, a centre of mighty spiritual power, and in the same way, and by the same law, that must urge itself forth the world over. There is a remarkable passage in one of Isaac Taylor's works on the missions and destinies of the Anglo-Saxon race. He looks at our love, as a race, for the Bible; our regard for Sabbath observance; the strength of our Christian character, and at our evangelic zeal as in contrast with other European people, and at the extraordinary position and influence we have secured over inferior and heathen peoples, and then asks whether this does not point to a special designation of God in working out the great Redemptive scheme. The greatest fact of the day is that Christianity is the strongest force in the midst of the strongest race in the world. Would not that fact alone ensure that it must absorb other religions, just as the language of the strongest nation does that of the weaker?

Depend on it, the process will go on with ever-accelerating rapidity. Things go at a great pace nowadays. The different peoples of the world are face to face with each other in a way never before realised. We touch one another by sympathy and the intercourse of ideas. What one nation possesses that is truly vital must ere long be the common possession of all. And so, Christ and Christianity, known and loved of this race, must speedily be the possession of all the world.

But here we might be disposed to say, "Well, if these great results are pre-ordained to come about by the march of events, what need of special efforts? Let things take their course, and, by the general intermingling and influence of race upon race, we shall have these issues result naturally upon the world's religious life." That would be to make a great mistake. No commercial house would ever argue like that. "Our national commerce is making great strides, therefore we may sit still. The march of events will carry us along." The Master says to us, "Go with the Gospel," and one of the reasons for that is that unless we go with the Gospel the nations will never come for it. Christianity is not an indigenous plant. It does not spring up from the soil by a natural process. It is ever an imported article, and it has to create its own demand. When it was first imported into this world, men

showed their appreciation of it by crucifying Him who brought it. The demand has to be created, by educating people first to a sense of their need of it and of the value of it. Trace the story of its spread, and you get the proof of that. Take, as an instance, the introduction of the Gospel amongst, not a foreign people, but a community of English-speaking people, but who, at the time the story begins, were as heathen as any in Africa. (Ay, let us never forget that a large part of the heathen to be brought to Christ are English-speaking heathen). I mean the introduction of the Gospel to San Francisco. San Francisco, the capital of California, is as well-churched a place now as any in the States, but at the time we are speaking of there was no church in it at all. The community was made up of miners, gamblers, blacklegs, and blackguards of every description. The pursuits were mining, gambling, drinking, and the coarsest dissipation. Religion was out of court altogether. Well, to this community came one day a man named William Taylor, Methodist preacher and backwoods Evangelist. He came by his own invitation, not theirs. The article he brought was in no demand at all. But he began work. He commenced preaching in the open air, for no building offered. His message was received at first with open-mouthed astonishment, then with derision and anger. He kept at it, however, till at last the market seemed to open. A man had been shot in a gambling quarrel, and, to his surprise, Taylor was asked to deliver an address at the funeral. A large crowd gathered, who seemed for once to be in a receptive mood. The preacher improved his opportunity. He spoke with power. The Spirit of God wrought in that crowd, and a deep impression was made. The result was (their way of doing things was characteristic all through), a public meeting was held at which it was proposed, seconded, and carried unanimously that religion should be recognised in the city. A church was at once built, and from this beginning came the Christian institutions which flourish now in that populous city. In this history you have a full illustration of what we are contending for. We must carry the Gospel to man because he is not in a condition to realise its beauty and value till its own divine power has wrought upon him. The human race is a flock of wandering sheep. The shepherd must go after them if they are to be reclaimed.

But we must climb higher yet. If we would get at the reason why missions, spite of all cavillings and opposition, must and will go forward, it is—and here have you the essence of all—from the operations of the law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus. That which really sways the heart of the true Evangelist at home and abroad is not so much considerations of national responsibility, or of the position of the world at the present time, though these have their weight. The real motive power is the sweet compulsion which Christ puts upon all who love Him. He says to us first, "Come," fills us with His Spirit; and then, "Go, and carry what you have to others." It is the operation, first, of a centripetal, and then of a centrifugal force. It is something not, indeed, contrary

to reason and what we call common sense, but at the same time above that sphere. Just so with the same impulse that makes us first of all follow Christ. When Levi, the publican, rose from his business and threw up his money-making to follow Him, that was not the result of a series of prudential calculations. No. He could not help himself. He had fallen in love with Christ, and he must forsake all and follow Him. When Paul set out on his career, what sent him forth was not anything in the way of calculation. It was a divine power and a divine love, a sense, to use his own words, of the unsearchable riches of Christ in him which sent him forth. That is so with the Church of Christ as a whole, in her truest atttitude, and with the individual members who burn and shine in the front ranks of her history.

There are men in the Church who do inferior work of a certain value who have a large eye for prudential considerations, but the real prophets and apostles of an age are not of this make. They preach, they labour, they give up, it may be, lucrative appointments to take on this line of life, and you ask them what considerations of interest or profit induced them to do this. You might as well ask a bird what considerations of prudence induce it to sing. The song is in it, and out it must come. A man once spoke to me about his son, who, he thought, would make a good minister. He wanted my advice and I had not much to give. He came again, and said he thought it would not do, the prospects were not good enough. I quite concurred. When a man talks of the ministry, and puts first its worldly prospects, he had better take up with street-sweeping and consider its prospects. Prospects! It is the wrong word in this connection. The true preacher, evangelist, missionary, works because he must. He must fulfil his mission. He can do no other. "For this cause came I into the world." As for prospects, the Master has said to him, "Lo, I am with you always."

All this leads up to a practical point with which we will close. The progress of missions abroad depends, under God, largely on the attitude we assume towards them at home. In an electric telegraph apparatus you have two things. On the one hand is a message received a thousand miles from the place of issue, clear, distinct, and producing its effect. That is the work done at the further end. But remember, the action and effect at that end depended on the strength and efficiency of the battery at the other end. Had there been no power here, there would have been no message there. Now this land of ours is, in respect of missions, very much what the battery is in relation to the wire. If we have no force at this end, there will be no Gospel message for the people at the other. If great missionary enterprises are to be carried on abroad they must be begun at home. People are apt to fall into the mistake of imagining they have covered their whole duty in missions when they have helped to equip and send out a certain class of men who have been requested to do this work. The work itself is considered as something quite away from the run of our ordinary church life. Those who do it are apt to be thought of as

strange animals who make an excellent show as curiosities on a platform. This is a complete departure from the true idea of church work. The work of the church at home is missionary work as really as that abroad. And we ought to be ready for as much sacrifice and self-denial in this as in that. John Wesley, at the age of eighty-six, rising at four in the morning, preaching twice and thrice a day, travelling between four and five thousand miles a year over execrable roads, and yet complaining that he and his people were in danger of becoming milksops, from the growing luxury of the age, is a reflection for some of us which we might pursue with advantage. We need this spirit of self-denial in the home work for the sake of the brethren abroad. Their hearts should be cheered by feeling that while they in one part of the field are called on to sacrifice much for their work's sake, their co-workers at home are just as enthusiastic and self-denying as they.

This work must come to the front and be kept there. We must be prepared to give for it the money out of our pockets, and, if the call come for them, the sons and daughters out of our homes. Parents give up their sons to the army, to traverse the world and shed their blood in the service of their sovereign. And we must have such a sentiment created and diffused as shall make us proud and glad to give of our choicest and best for the noblest of human careers: a career of work, under divine sanction and inspiration, for the loftiest interests of our race.

May God help us to understand these things, and happy shall we be if, understanding them, we do them. Let us hear these words of Christ, "If any man serve me let him follow me, and where I am there shall also my servant be." Where I am! At first in toil, in battle, in sacrifice, and then, when the fight is over, in the full light of His presence in heaven.

Balham. T. BRIERLEY.

OUR LIBRARY TABLE.

MANY of our readers will thank us for drawing their attention to the *Crown of Truthful Words*, published by J. Clarke & Co., 13, Fleet Street, London. It is an *In Memoriam* sermon, preached in Fish Street Church, Hull, by our esteemed contributor, the Rev. H. Elvet Lewis, for Mrs. Marie Hall, *née* Sibree. Those who only know Mr. Lewis from his articles in this Magazine know sufficient to lead them to get this sermon, in which beautiful thoughts are clothed in appropriate language. It is a poem in prose.

A number of reviews stand over, also articles by the Revs. J. Jackson Wray, Charles Leach, H. Elvet Lewis, R. Tuck, "A Shortman," and others. We trust the important article by the Rev. T. Brierley, B.A., on "Missions" will receive the attention it deserves. We are glad to hear that the subject is to be discussed at the Autumnal Assembly of the Congregational Union, to be held in October at Hanley.

A TRAGEDY OF THE SEA.

Letter from John Holkier, first mate of the barque "Dolphin," to his wife.

Off the Cape of Good Hope, *November 30th*, 1879.

MY DARLING WIFE,—You may be sure I have been very anxious about you, not only because I love you, but because I knew you would be dreadfully disappointed when my promised letters did not come. You will find them all in this packet. Better late than never. After I parted from you at Northend, I ran up to London, joined my ship, and we sailed the next morning. Every spare moment I could find I employed in writing to my Mary, but as the weather was stormy we had a hard time of it, and my letter, as you will see, was all scraps. We got through the Straits of Dover somehow, and then got a pretty tossing in the Channel. If the ship had not behaved A1 I believe we should have been compelled to turn back. I got my letter ready to send on shore at Plymouth, but when we were off Plymouth the gale had increased so much that the captain said he would not venture near shore, as it was safer to keep on. The consequence was that no letter bag went in at Plymouth. The captain made sure we should speak some ship which could bring letters home, but not one did we see. I could only pray that our gracious God would keep you calm during this time of suspense, and hope that you would not repent of having married a sailor because of the uncertainty of letters. Well, my dear Mary, I commended you fervently to God, and I was comforted by the thought that you would always be praying for me. When we got out of the Channel things were a bit quieter, and even in the Bay of Biscay I have known worse weather than we had. We kept on a good course until we came near Teneriffe, where the captain had promised to stop if possible. I had been writing you a long love letter a bit at a time, and I daresay when you read it you'll think it a curious mixture, and I often laughed to myself at the thought of your picking out the funny bits, and reading them to your mother. But just after we sighted Teneriffe it came on to blow hard, and it was all we could do to keep the ship right, and as for putting in, why it was out of the question. We dodged off and on for two days, and then the captain gave it up and we steered south. So on we went, and I wondered how you would hold up this time when nothing arrived from me. I felt thankful you were with your mother, who would cheer you up a bit, though she can't love you more than I do. Well, we sailed along, making very good time, until we came here, and this is the first chance I have had since we started of letting you know where I am. Along with this I send you all I have written during the voyage, and if you haven't lost all patience with waiting so long, I hope you'll be able to read through. I know it will not be so nice as if you had my letters at

the proper time, but never mind. Many a time in the day do I pray for you, my dearest Mary, and I look forward eagerly for the day when we shall be homeward bound. The bag is being made up, so that I have only time to say, God bless you for ever more. Give my love to your mother, and believe me always,

Your affectionate husband,
JOHN HOLKIER.

Brief narrative and letter by the Rev. Hallam Turner, Congregational minister at Northend-on-sea.

My friend John Holkier was first mate on a merchant ship. He married a sweet girl in my congregation, and, six weeks after the wedding, started on a voyage to China. Just before going, he asked me to perform certain services for his wife at the bank, during his absence. These I was glad to fulfil, as they enabled me to keep up intimate relations with the dear girl who had grown up in our Sunday school and church. The letter I have given above, as well as those which accompanied it, came all right, but they came to a darkened home, and a sorrowing town. It was my painful duty to send Holkier the following letter, which, now that he himself is dead, I feel at liberty to publish:—

"My dear Friend,—Your mother-in-law has asked me to undertake the task of communicating to you the sad intelligence that your dear wife has been taken suddenly from earth to heaven. I tell you in this abrupt way because nothing can alter the fact, and because I believe that your faith in God will uphold you even in this valley of the shadow of death. Your letters arrived safely, but they were never seen by the eyes that had so patiently looked for them, and so they were laid on the lifeless breast of your dear Mary. I hardly know how to narrate the sad circumstances of her death, so as to lessen the shock to your soul. I only wish I could convey the story by word of mouth, for then I could hold your hand, and speak my pity for you more warmly and tenderly than I can by letter.

"But first I must tell you how bravely and cheerfully your dear wife bore the disappointment of not hearing from you. She learned from London that your ship had not put in at Plymouth, and so she felt no anxiety at that time. When the weeks went by, and she knew you must have got to Teneriffe, and the time for letters passed without anything from you, she did then feel some trouble. She often spoke to me about it, and wondered if you were safe; but she never failed to preserve a cheerful temper, and a trustful and hopeful mind. Indeed, her mother fretted more than she did, and often made gloomy suggestions. But not even this could alter the calm faith and rest in God which seemed to fill your wife's soul. She did her household duties, and met her friends brightly, and on Sundays filled her accustomed seat at church. I am sure you will be glad to know this, and to feel that your dear wife's last days on earth were not troubled by heart-sickness, nor shadowed by anxious fear and dread about you.

Well, the time passed on. She was accustomed to take, at least once a week, that lovely walk, which you know so well, round the cliff by the sands, and over the hill back into the town. Generally her mother went with her, but sometimes she went alone. She told me she preferred that walk to all others, because she had so often taken it with you, and partly because she felt quicker sympathies with you and your life when she could see the waves and hear their sound. And so, a few days ago, she went once more, but as she delayed returning her mother became anxious. She did not return all night, and no trace of her could be found anywhere on the beach or in the town. We spent a painful night in watching, and when the tide came in it washed her dead body up on the sands. We could not explain the sad occurrence save by supposing that she had lingered too long at the foot of the cliff, and had been overtaken by the tide. Her lifeless form was carried reverently home *the very morning that the post brought your letters*, and to-morrow we shall commit her body to the ground, there to await the day of resurrection. May you, my dear friend, receive that divine support which is never denied to needy and troubled spirits. May you find to the full how precious is the living presence of our Lord Christ. He passed through sorrow's deepest darkness, and knows how to succour them that are tempted, and to Him do I earnestly commend you. May He be your stay and comfort.

"With heartfelt sympathy, I remain

"Yours affectionately,

"HALLAM TURNER."

DUTY.

SPEAK the word God bids thee!
No other word can reach
The chords that wait in silence
The coming of thy speech.

Do the work God bids thee!
One—only one still loom
Awaits thy touch and tending
In all this lower room.

Sing the song God bids thee!
The heart of earth's great throng
Needs for its perfect solace
The music of thy song.

ALFRED J. HOUGH.

THE QUIET PRAYER CIRCLE.—Have you one? You may have one wherever there are two or three to meet in the name of Jesus. You may have a quiet little gathering of women who love the Master and find refreshment when sitting low at his feet and talking to each other of His love. Such blessing comes from these modest almost hidden meetings, that if you had ever experienced their tender, chastening, elevating influence, you would be reluctant now to do without them. "Church work" is wearing a good many women out, the kind of church work which is often of doubtful value in the end—fairs, festivals, and entertainments of every kind. Many give themselves willingly to that style of Christian effort, but sometimes have no time to spare for the woman's prayer meeting. Prayer and meditation are too often abridged, if not almost crowded out, in these busy lives of ours. But a plant does not thrive without moisture, and He who has promised to be "as the dew unto Israel," comes with especial closeness and kindest revelation of Himself, where two or three are assembled to call upon His name.—*Christian Intelligencer.*

THE PASTOR'S CHAMPION—A NEW ENGLAND STORY.

THIS was read aloud from a Boston paper by Caleb French, Druggist and Postmaster, at Raytown:—"Wendell Morse, Esq., one of the most successful wool growers in Arizona, is in this city, with a large cargo of wool." It created quite a stir among the frequenters of French's store, for this Wendell Morse was a Raytown boy.

"Folks thought it a crazy notion—Wenn's going way off there," remarked an old man. He was warming himself while an ox-team waited outside. "But Parson Wilkinson said Wendell would succeed. Turns out old Parson was right, eh, Caleb?"

Caleb French ignored the question. He filed an order without correcting the customer, and then said: "Wendell has no relatives; he ought to do something handsome for this town. At least, I shall use what influence I have with him to that end."

"Town Hall or Library—which is it, Caleb?" asked the teamster, polishing the side of the stove with his blue-and-white striped mittens.

Caleb made no reply. It was noticed that he was often deaf when thus familiarly addressed. The old man added, "Well, I guess we can take care of all he wants to give us, eh, Ansel?" gently poking his neighbour with his elbow. This produced a remark from Ansel.

"I have an idea Wendell will do something for the church; come down with an organ, maybe."

The druggist heard this. There was a peculiar meaning to the bland smile he usually wore, as he quickly said, "Then *both* ends of the church will be *new*."

All present understood his meaning. He referred to the fact that another occupied the place of their former pastor, the "Parson Wilkinson," of whom the teamster spoke. Caleb French had taken an active part in bringing this about. He had ample opportunity, as his store was the centre for Raytown. The post office made a good excuse for men to linger and gossip with each other and the hospitable proprietor. The welcome he extended made him popular with all classes; meanwhile many a penny dropped from his hand into the till. It was from this point that an influence went out that grieved away a rare pastor. For twenty years he had most ably and successfully broken the bread of Life to Raytown church. Even Caleb could find no fault with him, except that he was "getting a trifle shaky; many of our people think we need a change."

Shortly after Wendell Morse's arrival in Boston, he appeared at Raytown and before the crowd at the druggist's. None of those who knew Wendell, the stripling, would have recognised him in this big, muscular, bearded stranger. But all felt that his hand-

grasp meant something, and that his heart was full of joy at being again among them.

Our friend the teamster was slightly disappointed at his plain attire. He observed discontentedly to his neighbour—while Caleb did the honours—"Nobody would take Wenn to be worth property; no diamond bosom-pin, no finger-ring with a stone." Then, raising his voice, "So ye found a fortune out in Arizony?"

"I made out pretty well," said Wendell. He added, with the emphasis of a self-made man: "But what I got I didn't *find*. I *worked* for it day and night. Three years I served the hardest master in the Territories; then I started myself alone, in a wilderness, cooked my own food, mended and washed my own clothes, saw nobody but half-breeds and miners. A dull life for a lively young fellow; but I stuck to it. Tell you what, it does a man good to see old faces again, and be where there's churches. I'm thinking of settling here for life."

There was a murmur of pleased surprise. Caleb French rubbed the palms of his hands softly together, and eyed his friend with speculative satisfaction. The latter turned suddenly to him.

"How's the parson, Caleb?"

"Doing fairly well, considering he's just out of the seminary."

Wendell Morse looked perplexed.

"He means Parson Wilkinson," said the teamster.

"Why, where is Parson Wilkinson?" asked the Arizonian, with evident anxiety.

"We've lost track of the old gentleman," said Caleb.

"*Lost track of him?*"

"Yes," said Caleb, with the affable smile that he used in the store; "Parson Wilkinson left us two years ago."

"*Left Raytown!*"

It seemed as if Wendell could not believe it. With real grief in his tone, he said, "I thought the dear old man was here, sure!"

Nobody spoke. The teamster nudged his neighbour expectantly, as Wendell added, "Why did he go?"

"The fact is," answered the druggist, "a good many of our young folks felt that the parson was getting a little heavy, so we had to give him a gentle hint to that effect. We all felt that the time had come for a change; that we ought to have some one more popular to fill the seats. A confidential meeting was held, and one of us requested to lay the matter before Mr. Wilkinson. It was, of course, a delicate point to make, but we managed it satisfactorily."

"O-h, you did!" gasped the muscular sheep raiser. Something glowed in his eyes. He looked like a man that would hold his own in a wilderness of Indians and lawless miners. He searched the faces of his old friends with questioning glances. There was an uncomfortable silence. All were certain that the returned hero was not pleased. Caleb proceeded: "Mr. Wilkinson immediately withdrew"—

Unluckily for the cause that Caleb was smoothly defending, the teamster spoke: "The old parson he took it dreadful hard; seems

as though a fever couldn't have mowed him down worse. He got another fellow to read his resignation; never entered our pulpit after, did he, Caleb?"

With extreme dignity the druggist went on: "And steps were taken to fill his place with a younger man. Of course it is hard to sever old ties; we all esteem Mr. Wilkinson, and wish him success in his new field of labour. We trust"—

"Oh, pshaw!" thundered Wendell, bringing down a huge fist so hard upon the show-case that it shivered the glass and startled everybody. "Folks don't get rid of what they 'esteem'! 'Wish success'—pshaw!—that's *too* cheap! Offer that kind of goods to somebody else, Caleb; I believe in a man's saying what he means."

He suddenly faced the others. "Neighbours, I wouldn't have done that job for all the gold in Arizona! Why, it's like sending off a parent because he's old! And if a man's child turns him out, who else is going to take him in? Why, this was his home. He's brought most of us up, you might say; and there's many under the snow on burying-hill that he's showed the way clear up to glory!"

Wendell choked, pausing in his vehement speech. He wiped his forehead as if it had been midsummer.

The deep silence was broken by the teamster.

"I told 'em they'd live to regret it! Why, Parson Wilkinson married me! And when he buried my two small girls, seemed as though he couldn't have been more sorry if they'd been his own."

This touched the Arizonian. He stepped forward and shook hands with the teamster, who, stimulated by this public attention, said: "Why, just afore they shoved him out, Parson Wilkinson gave back two hundred dollars of his salary to repair the meeting house. Couldn't possibly afford it, could he"—

He was about to refer to "Caleb," but stopped short before the look of disturbance on that usually bland countenance. He forgot to substitute any other as he noted the universal air of depression in the room. Raytown people had been led by cool ambitious men like Caleb French; many now realised for what trivial reasons. The sorrow of Wendell's great heart over the old pastor's absence woke their former love, and made his next remark a stinging rebuke.

"I wish you'd let me known, friends; I'd have taken the old parson off your hands! Yes, and called it a paying investment! You see, he was the making of me. I didn't have no Sunday out there; I had to get along with thinking of the church here, and what Parson Wilkinson taught me. What do you suppose kept me straight all those years, friends? The thought of seeing him; of coming back and saying, 'I've made enough to carry me through. I'll stay here now. When you want anything for the Church, or the mission Societies, sing out to me—you sha'n't call but once!"

In a moment he spoke again: "It's hard, after all these years, to come home and find the dear old man gone, and in such a way! Make up the damage on your glass, Caleb; I didn't come here to break and destroy. Does anybody know where the parson is?"

"He was called to ——" said Caleb, meekly.

"I happened to be round there last summer," said the teamster. "He'd given up—Mrs. Williams was so poorly, and gone where there was some big doctor. I guess he ain't much heart to preach, anyway. Well, I must be moving on."

Wendell also left. At the tavern he called for pen and ink and wrote to a neighbouring minister, inquiring about Mr. Wilkinson. It is to be regretted that this characteristic epistle was not saved. This reply came back:

DEAR BROTHER.—Your former pastor left here some months since, depressed and much broken in health. At your request, I have found out his present whereabouts. He is in the city of——, on account of his wife's state of health. In regard to his finances, he has not had any income since resigning his last pastorate. He was not before that able to lay by anything for this time of need; but says, "I have not lacked the necessaries of life, through the aid of Christian strangers. My chief trial is the long sickness which my wife is enduring." I *know* this brother is in great need.

"I thought so!" said Wendell. "I take it the old parson's calling me!"

He packed his valise, telling Raytown he should probably not return. For obvious reasons Caleb did not feel free to suggest his doing "something handsome" for the place: hall, library, and organ had faded from their vision!

Wendell hastened to the Wilkinsons. Time had changed his pastor greatly; so had the trouble at Raytown; but there was no bitterness towards those who caused it.

"I was mad clean through when I found you gone," said Wendell. "I never felt so like knocking somebody down. I'm only half civilised, anyway. I only know enough to make money; had to come clear on here to get you to tell me what to do with it. Remember what you used to say, parson? We didn't really own nothing ourselves; everything was the Lord's, and we were His stewards to do good with it. I never forgot that." Tears came into the eyes of his impetuous champion. "Seems as though I couldn't go back without hearing one of those old rousing sermons. Why, I'm just hungry for one, parson."

It was like a refreshing breeze from the west; it brought a little glow into the minister's pale cheek. He straightened himself, smiling faintly; but very soon it faded, leaving a feeble man.

"You haven't the strength to preach," said Wendell, tenderly, "but you can help me out on this steward business, parson."

He rapidly unfolded a plan, Mr. Wilkinson's eyes brightening.

"What pleasanter work could a man have!" he exclaimed. "God give me wisdom to distribute wisely such munificent bounty!"

* * * * * * *

Again at Raytown the teamster made one of the group at French's store.

"They say that Mr. Wilkinson has become trustee for some property," said Caleb, "with power to distribute it among such charities as he deems best. In view of his long settlement here,

he might remember our church; we are sort of children to him, you know."

The teamster's face had been working. He burst out: "It's my opinion that money Parson Wilkinson handles come clear from Arizony. It was ready to help here; but couldn't stand the way its old minister was shoved out, so it's gone elsewhere." Then, as he moved towards the waiting oxen, he added, "I knew you'd all live to regret it."

CHURCH-AID AND HOME MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

WORK IN SOMERSETSHIRE.

CHURCH-AID and Home Missionary work is carried on by "The Somerset Congregational Union and Evangelist Society," in two branches—one being devoted to the maintenance of the poorer churches, the promotion of Christian fellowship, and co-operation with the Church-Aid Society, and the other aiming distinctly at the evangelisation of the scattered population in this agricultural county. Although these two parts of the Congregational work of Somerset are managed by different committees, they are brought into association and relationship in many ways. The officers and committees of both are frequently in conference together, and at the Spring and Autumn Meetings of the Union the evangelists form part of the general assembly in session.

A few zealous supporters of the Church-Aid Society occasionally express themselves as strongly opposed to this evangelistic work, so-called. Their adverse sentiments are due, first, to their absence from the county of Somerset, and secondly, to the word "evangelists." If we had thought it worth while to speak of these brethren as stipendiary lay-pastors we should probably have heard fewer complaints from our anxious friends. But it should be distinctly understood that the ministers and laymen forming the executive committees of these two branches of our Union are *unanimous* in their opinion as to the reasonableness and desirability of maintaining separate financial organisations. Any proposal to unite them would be regarded as uncalled-for, and certain to damage our financial position. The present plan of keeping the Society which supports the evangelists separate from that which supports the ordained pastors of the poorer churches permits us to present to our constituency the claims of the county in both aspects. We succeed at every church blessed with a spirit of Christian zeal in getting collections on two Sundays in the year, instead of one, and in fourteen churches we have two lists of subscriptions instead of one. There is no room to doubt that by this method we receive at least half as much again for our united funds as we should by having only one society to plead for. There are many persons in our congregations to whom the evangelistic department appeals

the more strongly, and there are others who are more drawn out in sympathy with the ordained grantee pastors.

In the County Union there are thirty-nine churches under pastoral supervision, of which fifteen are aided. Six "branch" churches have separate membership, but are grouped with larger churches. There are twenty preaching stations which have chapel buildings, and nine cottage meetings are known to be held weekly.

The Evangelist Society supports twelve men who occupy districts of considerable area which altogether cover a large part of the county. They conduct services regularly in twenty-three chapels and six cottages, besides their daily house-to-house visitation.

Altogether, therefore, there are eighty-two chapel services and fifteen cottage meetings held in connection with the Congregational body in Somerset. Accommodation is provided for 22,933 persons. Of fifty-one pastors and evangelists only twenty-four are not aided by this county branch of the Church-Aid Society. To realise how heavy is the local burden of maintaining the twelve evangelists and assisting the fifteen aided pastors, it must be remembered that Somerset is a very large county with a sparse agricultural population. The whole county contains 431,000 persons; but one-third of this area has, for geographical reasons, been grouped with other Unions. The Gloucester and Hereford Union stretches out its hand as far south as Weston-super-Mare, and the Wilts and East Somerset Union absorbs Bath and Frome. What remains to us, therefore, represents a population not greater than that of the single town of Leeds—or about 300,000. The few market towns are far apart. Some six or seven churches only are able efficiently to help the large number of their poorer brethren.

For the raising of our funds we depend as much upon organisation as upon intelligent sentiment. Thirty churches have subscription lists for one or both branches of our work, besides making collections. By these means we raised last year £820 in the county, which was below the amount of the preceding year, but £50 above it if we allow for the decrease caused by the loss of a single subscriber. The congregations assisted by the Church-Aid Society have a total average attendance on Sundays of just 3,000. The membership of the aided churches is 829, about sixty-five members having been received during the year 1884. The Sunday scholars number 2,261. The voluntary contributions for the support of the ministry by these comparatively weak churches amounted to £686, and their subscriptions for incidentals, Sunday-schools, &c., reached a total of £555. Anyone who would like to cultivate his arithmetic or to satisfy his curiosity may compare these figures with those of many wealthier districts of the country, and will find that Somerset is comparatively a long way ahead in the matter of both liberality or organisation. I have before me at this moment a list which shows that during the past three years the sum of at least £6,411 has been spent in this county in chapel and school building and improvements.

In the endeavour to stir up the liberality of our congregations we have divided our county into five districts, under six superintendents, whose duty it is to visit the churches in their districts once a year, and to lay before the people the claims of Home Missions. Opportunity is at the same time afforded for the promotion of brotherly relations between the various churches in the Union, which is in most cases heartily welcomed.

But notwithstanding all our efforts, and the conspicuous liberality of some of our churches, supported by the free grant of £440 from the central fund of the Church-Aid Society, the average income of the ordained pastors of the grantee churches of Somerset is about the lowest in the country, being not more than £78 during last year. This year we hope to advance upon that amount, but not by more than three or four pounds at most.

It remains only to be said that lay agency is very fully developed in Somerset. Lay preachers are to be reckoned among us by hundreds. Were it not for the assistance so afforded by men engaged during the week in business, many of our chapels would have to be closed. And, looking at this beautiful county, dotted all over with villages whose population is so largely working-class as well as agricultural, one is led to wonder why ministers with private means do not seek out some of these needy country churches, and so relieve the Church-Aid Society of the burden of maintaining pastors over them in a condition of indigence. Many difficulties would so be solved; the Church-Aid Society would not have so serious a drain upon its funds; there would be fewer ministers unable to procure more than the necessaries of life; and the position of Congregationalism would be strengthened in the country districts instead of becoming weaker year by year. These well-to-do brethren would be as comfortable as in the towns, while doing as large or even larger a work.

Considerable vitality has been shown by many of these village congregations during the last few years. The sums raised for building purposes, as mentioned above, would suffice to prove that to be true; but I refer rather to the number of church members admitted by profession of faith, the zeal shown in mission services, and the multifarious temperance societies. If this agricultural people are called tillers of the soil, farmers, and ploughmen, there are multitudes of them who serve another Master, sowing seed and tilling the land for another Harvest.

Bridgwater. EDWIN. J. DUKES.

OH, may I join the choir invisible
Of those immortal dead who live again
In minds made better by their presence: live
In pulses stirred to generosity,
In deeds of daring rectitude, in scorn
For miserable crimes that end with self.
In thoughts sublime that pierce the night like stars,
And with their mild persistence urge men's search
To vaster issues. GEORGE ELIOT.

ADDRESSES TO YOUNG CONGREGATIONALISTS.

II.—JOINING A CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH *(continued)*.

LET me, then, suppose that you have been brought at last to a determination to join the Church of Christ, and, by choice, a Church whose polity is known by the name Congregationalism; that you have made known your desire to the minister, and have given satisfactory assurances of your Christian faith, and of the motives which move you to seek admission into the fellowship of Christ—to obey Christ's will in first joining His Church, and afterwards serving Him through it; and that you have now received an intimation that you have been elected by the Church into its fellowship. It will be a time when a few words of brotherly direction may not be in vain.

Endeavour, then, to realise thoroughly the important step you are taking. Do not let the perturbing thoughts and the excitement naturally enough attending upon such a grave step disturb the clear definition of the act, as a flock of fluttering wild fowl descending upon a clear pool breaks up its sharp reflection. Do not glide into the Church as a man floats down stream, half asleep in a delicious dream. Go quietly and think over it; so far as is possible, let every faculty of your nature be awake to the full significance of the step. Let it be evermore stamped upon your soul as one of the few great and memorable acts of life.

Consider thankfully that you have received the free expression of the confidence which a Christian community has in you. You have doubtless had, as most young people have, thoughts of your own unfitness for the step you are taking. You have been tempted to defer it until you are worthier and holier, forgetful that the Church is itself the training school in which you are to "grow in grace," and that the condition of entrance into it is not sanctification, but *faith*—sincere, earnest, personal belief in Christ's redemption. And now it will much encourage you that you have first gained the confidence of the minister of the church you desire to enter, and of such of the brethren as have been deputed to confer with you—men who have had some experience in leading young believers into the fold, and whose judgment, though it cannot rank on the same level as the testimony of your own conscience, illumined by the Holy Spirit, yet will be surely valued by you. If you have entered freely and frankly into your religious experiences, such as they are, and have given the brethren an opportunity of becoming acquainted with the history of your faith, and have thereupon received from them encouragement in proceeding with your application for membership, you may well rejoice. For if there were facts in connection with your case which, when kindly and sympathetically considered, led them to the conclusion that your application was premature or ill-considered, they would not

shrink from giving you their opinion, even though it occasioned them pain to do so. But since their representations to the brotherhood have led to your election, you are right in letting it weigh with you as an assuring and comforting fact.

Moreover, the acts of the Church of Christ upon earth are not to be considered as of an importance equal only to those of a merely worldly society. The "two or three gathered together in the name of Christ" are not left to the caprice of mere human judgments, to the accidents and follies of human prejudices and blindness. We do the Church most serious wrong in estimating its solemn judgments as of no higher authority than the decisions of earthly tribunals. Consider well that section of your *Manual*, in which it is clearly proved that none but Christians, by the will of Christ, can be members of a Christian Church; the argument of which contention rests, in the first place, upon what is set forth in Matt. xviii. 15—20, concerning the nature of the Church. Note especially on page 42 these words: "What the Church binds on earth is to be bound in heaven; what it looses on earth is to be loosed in heaven. This implies a union of the most intimate kind between the Church and Christ, in whom the Church is one with God." This, and nothing commoner or meaner, is the unique position of a true Church. To accept any lower ideal is to introduce the element of decay and dissolution. The Church is either the depository of spiritual power or it is nothing at all. Let us take the higher and grander view, and let us live up to it, and we shall not fail to be conscious of the potentiality which ever accompanies the indwelling of the Spirit of Christ. Therefore bear in mind it is no common verdict which thus names you worthy of the fellowship of the saints.

Still more impressive will it be if you are entering the church in which you have been nurtured as a child, where you have sat and listened to the Gospel all your life; in whose school you have studied the Holy Scriptures, and have received the loving and friendly counsels of Christian teachers; especially if, among those who have lifted their hands to signify approval of your membership, there are those who know you best—your father and mother and relatives, as well as most intimate and dear friends. If such be your case, and you appreciate rightly the significance of the situation, you may well rejoice.

Then there are certain thoughts which flow naturally from the fact that you are uniting yourself to a democratic assembly. It is in itself more honourable to receive the free suffrages of a Christian society than to be permitted to join such a body through the favour of an individual, or through an empty formality which involves no discrimination of character; but beyond this, your feelings towards the society you are entering will be ruled by this consideration of its democratic constitution.

The Fourth Principle in the *Manual*, which is the principle of Congregationalism, deserves very careful and special study. No part of Dr. Dale's treatise is more carefully wrought, nowhere is his method more completely satisfactory, his argument more clear,

his style more virile, than in this vital chapter. Note the following sentence on page 62:—

"The great contention of Congregationalism is not that every Christian man has a *right* to share in the government of the Church, but that every Christian man is directly *responsible* to Christ for securing, in the discipline, doctrine, and worship of the Church, the supremacy of its Divine Founder and Lord."

And again on the following page:—

"It is one of the chief ends of the Church to realise the ideal of Christian brotherhood. . . . The poorest and most miserable men, when they were received into the Christian Church, were assured that they were the 'brethren' of Christ, and the brethren of all who were in the Church before them."

If you will try and realise all that is signified in these most important words, certain distinct feelings will naturally and properly possess your mind as you enter the fellowship of a Congregational church.

You will feel at once that you are a living factor in the work of the Church. You enter as an enfranchised spirit, having at once the liberty of the children of God in regard to the affairs of the kingdom of heaven. You will feel drawn into close relations of interest and co-operation with the work of the brotherhood, inasmuch as henceforth, in very truth and sincerity, it is your own church you will work for, your own household; and if success there be, you will share in the glory, just as, if there be coldness and declension and failure, the shame will be yours. Your membership will not consist in having your name written upon the roll, or in being privileged to sit in the family circle at the Lord's Supper; but in the impressive sense you will have of being an integral factor in the institution, a living member of the living body. This fact is well calculated to enlist your active sympathy and interest. It is only by a great misapprehension in theory, or a great delinquency in practice, that there can be nominal members and sleeping partners in a Congregational church.

You are to be a "brother" or a "sister" in the Lord. The position is an honourable one, but it is more. You are entering a society which extends to you at once its affectionate regard. To this society you will be a loved one in Christ. To find mature and experienced saints, high-minded and revered men, devout and beautiful-souled women receiving you on terms of kind and sympathetic equality will not fail to impress you. The greeting you will receive from one and another, and the prayers of all for your prosperity in the highest things will deeply touch your young heart. It would be a crime to be indifferent to these things, and I cannot believe that any of you will, or even could, be indifferent to them, if you consider them rightly. Therefore let your heart and mind be awake to receive the full significance of the step you are taking.

Leytonstone. W. PIERCE.

(*To be continued.*)

THE YOUNG FOLKS' CORNER.

ON THE BEACH.

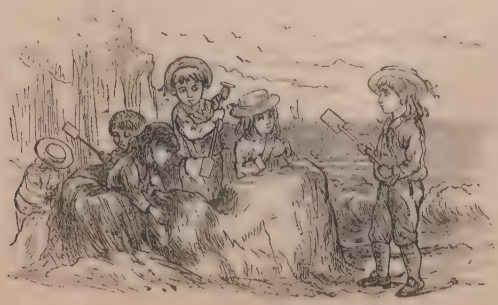
[The Editor is sorry that for several months there has not been a "Young Folks' Corner." He the more regrets this because he has good reason for knowing that the Magazine is finding its way into the hands of young people throughout our churches. He is anxious to make the Magazine increasingly welcome, not only to the older, but to the younger readers, and thus to interest them in all that concerns their present and eternal welfare. During this month numbers of them will be "On the Beach," some of them are here pictured. May each and all realise amid their holidays His love, who was once a child, and who, on the shore of Galilee's Lake, did, even in childhood, the Father's will.]

EACH with bucket and with spade,
All of breakers unafraid,
Johnny, Rosa, Bert, and Fay
In the sands together play,
Building castles on the beach,
All the music of their speech
Mingling with the ocean's roar;
Blessed, brown, barefooted four!

Three are journeymen expert,
Rosa, Fay, and chubby Bert,
They the finest stones select;
John, the famous architect,
Working with his utmost skill,
Makes his castle taller still,
It is finished now, and they,
Glad and proud, their work survey.

Have a care, my architect!
Comes a wave you scarce expect,
Curls itself round Rosa's feet,
Makes the pile a wreck complete.
Fay she sighs and Rosa stares,
Bert looks cross as twenty bears;
Johnny, brave as brave can be,
At the laughing, treacherous sea
Smiles defiance from the shore,
Saying, "I can build some more!"

Bravo, Johnny! so you can,
Sturdy, sunburned little man,
Teach me your philosophy;
So that when the mocking sea
Bears my castles from the shore
I can smile, and build some more.



THE TEACHERS' PAGE.

INTERNATIONAL LESSONS FOR AUGUST.

THE lessons for this month are full of the personality of Elijah, who was, in some senses, the greatest prophet Judaism ever produced. Dean Stanley speaks of him as the "grandest and most romantic character." And Dr. Geikie says: "He takes rank along with Samuel and Moses; not like the former, as the apostle of a system yet undeveloped; or as the founder of a religion, like the latter; but as the restorer of the old when it was almost driven from the earth." Dr. Macduff suggestively treats Elijah as "the Prophet of Fire." All the other persons introduced in these lessons, and all the situations described, are subservient to him, and the selection of subjects brings the great man before us in the more important public and private scenes of his life. The closing lesson last month introduced him to us, and we may recall to mind God's care of him when he was suffering from the drought which he had been sent to announce to Ahab. They who do faithfully God's work in the world may be quite sure of God's faithful care. "None of them that trust in Him shall be desolate."

This month we see Elijah bravely confronting Ahab, and nobly vindicating the honour and claims of Jehovah on Carmel (1 Kings xviii). We follow Elijah, in his weariness and depression, into the silent desert, where he receives Divine comfortings and teachings (1 Kings xix). And we learn how the man of God can be as brave to denounce personal iniquity as national transgression; and how certainly the judgments of God must come on all violent and wrong doers (1 Kings xxi).

There are some things recorded of Elijah, such as his slaughter of the Baal prophets, and his destruction of the captains and their fifties, which we find it very difficult to explain or to approve. His work was "marked by the imperfection of the dispensation to which he belonged. The defender of a national theocracy, he burst on his age as a minister of judgment against unrighteousness; his sternness like that of a storm; his words lightning and tempest. All his acts show him, like a fire, consuming the ungodly; an embodiment of the avenging justice of God in an evil day." By comparing Elijah with other messengers and servants of God, we learn that God needs persons of very different characters, and He asks from them service of very different kinds. He finds the precise man for an age, and endows him with the precise gifts needed in his age. So every man must be seen in his setting; every life in its surroundings. It is often said of great preachers, "They would not have the same power if they lived nowadays." But that is a foolish speech. God fitted them to their times, and He would have fitted them to *these* times if He had called them to live *now*.

Then we are never required to give an absolute approval of any man's *methods*. Absolute approval of his *spirit* may be given; and we may recognise the adaptation of his method to the particular age in which he lives. We need not do exactly what he did. We may show the same spirit in our doing that he showed. And *that* is the true imitation of an example, and applies even to our imitating the Lord Jesus Christ.

The points which stand out prominently this month are—

1. The promptness of Elijah's obedience. We never find any hesitating because what was required of him was difficult and dangerous. "He conferred not with flesh and blood."

2. God's care of all who do His work. To feed them; to renew their strength; to meet their trust.

3. Sudden impressions too often have but a passing influence.

4. Frail bodies hinder good work. The Horeb scene reminds us of God's tender patience in dealing with His depressed servants. "He knoweth our frame."

5. Silent agencies are really mightier than noisy ones. Light does more than lightning; air than wind. In every age it is true that the "Kingdom of God cometh not with observation."

6. The blood of the innocent cries to God, "How long, O Lord, dost Thou not avenge our blood on the earth"! The story of Naboth reminds us of the sin of covetousness, the dreadful craving to *get* and to *possess*, that makes it possible to commit crime, and even to murder the innocent, in obeying our covetous cravings. "Be content with such things as ye have."

R. TUCK.

INTERRUPTED.

I planned a plan, and duly made
  A plan to fill one little day.
Pleasure and toil were gauged and weighed,
  This hour for work and that for play,
  And each for each made room and way.

I set my wilful feet to tread
  The wilful path self-chosen as right,
Resolved to walk unhindered,
  Nor turn to left, nor turn to right,
  Until the coming of the night.

But interruptions all day long,
  And little vexing hindrances,
Each weak, but all together strong,
  Came one by one to fret and tease,
  And balk my purpose, and displease.

Friendship laid fetters on the noon,
  And fate threw sudden burdens down.
And hours were short, and strength failed soon,
  And darkness came the day to drown,
  Hope changed to grief, and smile to frown.

Then I said sadly: "All is vain;
  No use there is in planning aught,
Labour is wasted once again,
  And wisdom is to folly brought,
  And all the day has gone for naught."

Then spoke a voice within my soul:
  "The day was yours, and will was free,
And self was guide and self was goal,
  Each hour was full as hour could be—
  What space was left, my child, for *Me?*

"Where was the moment in your plan
  For work of Mine which might not wait?
The need, the wish of fellow man,
  The little threads of mutual fate
  Which touch and tangle soon or late?

"These 'hindrances' which made you fret,
  These 'interruptions,' one by one,
They were but sudden tasks I set,
  My errands for your feet to run,
  Will you disdain them, child, or shun?"

Oh, blind of heart and dull of soul!
  I only felt, the long day through,
That I was thwarted of my goal,
  And chafed rebelliously, nor knew
  The Lord had aught for me to do!

Forgive me, Lord, my selfish day,
  Touch my sealed eyes, and bid them wake
To see Thy tasks along the way,
  Thy errands, which my hands may take,
  And do them gladly for Thy sake.

SUSAN COOLIDGE.

SEPTEMBER, 1885.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

By J. Jackson Wray.

PART I.

THE names of people and places, in the olden time, had far more to do with their history, character, and surroundings than is customary to-day. Nowadays names are chiefly chosen for their sound, or *in memoriam* of something or somebody, and are of very little assistance in giving us information concerning either localities, things or individuals. Formerly it was far otherwise. Our common English name Smith did, at first, denote the trade that was followed by him who bore it. So with Fletcher or Flesher, Farrar or Farrier. It will be found that most of our names can be traced back to a time when the first bearers of them were described by them, either as to what they did, or where they lived, or as to some physical peculiarity. In the Scripture record we find that names were given, changed, added to and altered to give some new meaning, record some event, or otherwise carry a lesson that ought not to be forgot. The name had a meaning, and was chosen with a purpose.

God Himself, we are told, named Adam so, because the word means red earth, out of which he was made. When Rachel gave birth to Benjamin, the child was called Benoni, the son of sorrow, because in giving birth to him the mother died. But afterwards, when the prattle of the child became as music to the bereaved father, and his eyes reflected the clear shine of his dead mother's, Jacob changed his name to Benjamin, the "son of my right hand." After a victory over the Philistines, Samuel set up a stone, and called it Ebenezer, because, said he, "hitherto the Lord hath helped us." So Joseph's name was altered by Pharaoh into "the revealer of secrets." And we all with solemn and grateful thoughts remember who it was that was called Immanuel, God with us, and also Jesus, because He should save His people from their sins. Now we can understand how it was that Joseph made a special and important business of it when he gave their names to his twin sons.

"And Joseph called the name of the first-born Manasseh, for God, said he, 'hath made me to forget all my toil and all my father's house.'"

"Manasseh," that means "Forgetting," and that was the name given by Joseph to his eldest son—"God hath made me to forget all my toil." But surely he does not mean that all the toil and trouble and cruelty that saddened his life have clean gone out of his mind and memory! God does not destroy memory. "We cannot, if we would, forget." The biting sneers, the raging jealousy, the ill-treatment of his brothers, the pit into which he was lowered, his transfer into the hands of the slave-dealers, who took money for his flesh and blood, all that miserable time he spent in Egyptian dungeons where he was lying under a false

charge; he could not forget it all, and rub it from the tablets of his memory as with a sponge. And that other sentence, "And all my father's house;" he surely cannot mean that father, brothers, relatives are all and altogether gone from his mind? We know better than that. What made him ask the tender question, "Is the old man, your father, still alive?" How was it that he could not look on his brother Benjamin without turning aside to weep? that did not look like forgetting, did it?

No, no. The simple meaning of it all is this:—The kindly influence of time, for these things happened years and years ago, had dulled out all the pain of them. He could look back upon them with complacency. He used to think, as you and I have thought before to-day, that he should never, never get over it; that the whip of misfortune and unkindness would make a life-long mark. But now he can say "The winter is over and past, and the time of the singing of birds has come." Every snow-flake is melted away; gone are all the leaden clouds of yesterday. "Let them go," says he, "it is a pleasant thing for the eyes to behold the sun."

You see time, that does so many things to sadden us, has also a mission to gladden us, to relieve us of all the acuter pains of bereavement, of wrong, of loss, of disappointment, and to give us hope that we shall feel them even less to-morrow. There are many who, in the first pangs of their bereavement, for instance, were led to feel that light had died out of life, and that they could never lift up head or heart again. But thanks to kindly time, to the mildening effects of intervening nights and days, the load is lightened, the heart is consoled; and to-day, Manasseh, forgetting, is inscribed upon the Ebenezer stones that mark the journey of their life.

"O, time! who knowest a lenient hand to lay
Softest on sorrow's wounds, and slowly thence
Lulling to sad repose the weary sense,
The faint-grown pang steals unperceived away.

Time takes the trouble, which we thought would last,
Quietly ends it, slowly dries our tear,
So that we can look on dark clouds past,
And wonder at the banishment of fear.

So may we meet life's peaceful ev'ning with a smile;
As some lone bird, at day's departing hour,
Sings in the sunbeam of a transient shower,
Forgetting shower in shine, with wings still wet the while."

And then, again, the precious influences of God's divine grace had also been at work on Joseph's heart and mind. Those brothers of his, it is true, had treated him vilely, but then he knew that there were faults on both sides. His father had no right to show him such partiality, and so to rouse their anger and dislike. His own conduct, too, had neither been the wisest nor the best. To stand up among them and tell them of his dreams, and how their sheaves were to bow and bend before his own sheaf, standing stiff and straight, and how their stars were to pale and twinkle before

his bright particular star, was more than human nature could stand. Surely, it was not just the kindest and most brotherly thing to do.

There is no doubt, that the young fellow was badly used, and seeing that he was pretty much like the rest of us, there is little doubt that he entertained the idea of being even with them some day. He would pay them back in their own coin, and let them know that he could give them a Roland for an Oliver as well as the best of them. He had an idea that he could never again think of them with affection. And yet, thank God, religion put a better spirit into him, and no sooner does he get a chance of having a little private and confidential chat with them, than he breaks out into weeping, and says, "I am Joseph, your brother!"

When I see this, I am constrained to say, "Well done, Joseph!" You've written "Manasseh, forgetting" on the whole unkind and unhappy business, and to your other virtues you have added brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness charity, as a good man should.

There are many of us who have been unkindly treated by our relatives, who have been wronged by our trusted friends, who have been unfairly treated by those with whom we have had business relations, or coldly regarded by those to whom we looked for hearty good will. At times we have really felt so vexed and grieved and hurt that we said we hoped never to cross their path again. It is true that in our absence of self-knowledge we may have said with a sort of complacent grace that we will "forgive, but we cannot forget," which generally means that we are inclined to do neither the one nor the other. Surely it were well to remember that probably there is much to be said on the other side. Our own conduct to them, likely enough, was not without fault and mistake, and external influences, of which we know little or nothing, may have helped to shape their conduct and to account for their deeds.

Surely the influence of the religion of Jesus should lead us to write "Manasseh," forgetting, right across that unpleasant page in our biography, and to say—

"Let bygones be bygones; if bygones were clouded
By aught that occasioned a pang of regret,
O let them in darkest oblivion be shrouded,
'Tis wise and 'tis kind to forgive and forget.

Let bygones be bygones; and good be extracted
From ill over which it is folly to fret;
The wisest of mortals have foolishly acted—
The kindest are those who forgive and forget.

Let bygones be bygones; O cherish no longer
The thought that the sun of affection has set;
Eclipsed for a moment, its rays will be stronger,
If you, like a Christian, forgive and forget.

Let bygones be bygones; your heart will be lighter
When kindness of yours with reception has met;
The flame of your love will be purer and brighter,
If, God-like, you strive to forgive and forget.

Let bygones be bygones; O purge out the leaven
Of malice, and try an example to set

To others, who, craving the mercy of Heaven,
Are sadly too slow to forgive and forget.

Let bygones be bygones; remember how deeply
To Heaven's forbearance we all are in debt;
They value God's infinite goodness too cheaply
Who heed not the precept, 'FORGIVE AND FORGET.'"

And then, too, there was not only the influence of time, in Joseph's case, that led him to write Manasseh on the unkindly and sorrowful past; there was not only the gracious influence of religion that enabled him to let it pass. He could afford to do it, also, because of the new mercies and succeeding blessings of his life. These helped to rub out the sorenesses of old vexations and the sadnesses of olden sorrows. He turned away his eyes from the study of the gloomy past, and set himself to an honest consideration of the gifts of God's goodness that marked his present lot. He put the portrait of the poor, friendless Joseph of yesterday, back into the portfolio, or, at any rate, turned the canvas to the wall, and looked steadily on the sun-printed photograph of the Joseph of to-day. No wonder that he docketed the former as "Manasseh, forgetting."

There is a lesson here well worth learning, by one and all. Whenever we are inclined to brood over yesterday's annoyances and cares, let us sit down and have a good look at the blessings and pleasings that have come to us to-day. There is an old proverb to the effect that some people "cannot see the wood for the trees"; that is to say, they lose sight of the forest of blessings which are theirs, because they fix their eye too much on two or three trees whose growth is stunted by circumstances or whose boughs have been blasted by lightning stroke. The particular is ever present with them, the general is forgotten. If you fill your eyes with the sun you cannot see the clouds for the light that is in them; and the more you fill your minds with the vision of to-day's mercies the less will you see of yesterday's mournful memories, and the more gladly will you write, "Manasseh, forgetting," against that date in your diary, and say,

"Yesterday's troubles and yesterday's toil,
Yesterday's vexings, and yesterday's moil;
On these I have pondered enough and to spare.
In the good of the present, I vow and declare,
I have reason that story behind me to cast;
I see compensation for all that is past;
And yesterday's trials are vanished away,
As I count on my fingers my blessings to-day."

I see, I think, another reason why Joseph was enabled to call the elder twin "Manasseh, forgetting." Not only the influence of time, of religion, of the present, but also the influence of hope. In his child he saw the future. He saw in him one to whom fulfilled prophecy would bring honours, and a home in the land of promise. He saw for himself and his posterity the possession of the covenant, the fulfilment of the gracious promise of his God. He might not live to see it all, but by faith he gave commandment

concerning his bones. They, at any rate, should lie in a quiet and honoured grave beneath the slopes of Lebanon, or where the lilies of the valley should hang their delicate bells, nodding in the breeze, and the roses of Sharon should scent the air. While his children should be set among the princes of his people.

We, too, may live in hope, and even a brighter hope than that. He who is the God and giver of all the blessings of to-day is Lord also of to-morrow. Each coming day shall bring its own supplies; each coming night shall have its own full complement of stars; and after days have ceased to bring the sun, and night stars have ceased to shine, then no more heart-aches. "The morn eternal breaks! The soul immortal wakes, wakes with its God." There its sun goes down no more, and the days of mourning shall be ended! In that glad day the raptured soul shall write an indelible "Manasseh, forgetting," for the Lord hath said to such, "Then shalt thou lift up thy face without spot. Thou shalt be steadfast and shalt not fear. Thy light shall be clearer than the noonday. Thou shalt shine forth. Thou shalt be as the morning. Thou shalt forget thy misery, and remember it only as waters that pass away!"

(*To be concluded next month.*)

CHURCH-AID AND HOME MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

THE NEW DEPARTURE.

WE reported, in the April number of the CONGREGATIONAL MAGAZINE, the appointment by the Council of a Special Committee "to consider the financial position of the Society, the causes which hinder the increase of its income, and the means to be adopted to promote its efficiency." In the June number, some of the suggested changes were intimated, together with the resignation of the Secretary, the Rev. E. J. Hartland. We have now to report that the following resolution was adopted at a special meeting of the Council, held on July 6th, on the recommendation of the Special Committee:—

"That the inquiries of the Committee thus far having impressed its members with a sense of the critical importance of the work before it, and of the need of careful deliberation before any decisive step is taken, the Committee recommends that, if possible, an arrangement of a temporary character, for a term not exceeding one year, be made; and that with this view the Committee of the London Union be asked to set Mr. Mearns free to serve the Society for that time, retaining his present office in the Union, the Society undertaking to meet the cost of the necessary provisional arrangements in the Union office."

This arrangement has, we are glad to say, received the unanimous sanction of the Committee of the London Congregational Union. The Rev. A. Mearns has now entered fully on the duties of the secretariat, and all letters on the business of the Society should be be addressed to him at the Memorial Hall, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.

An early meeting will be held of the Special Committee appointed for conference in regard to administrative or other changes which may be necessary.

Meanwhile Mr. Mearns, who will, we trust, be generously supported in this arduous service, is very anxious to be brought into correspondence and conference with the county auxiliaries in regard to plans of operation in their districts, at the earliest possible date. With this object he has addressed the following circular letter to the secretaries of the various associations:—

"Memorial Hall, Farringdon Street, E.C.,
"*1st August*, 1885.

"My dear Sir,—Under the new arrangements which have been made by the Church-Aid and Home Missionary Society there seems to be a good opportunity for enlisting additional sympathy on behalf of the objects which the Society has in view.

"In order to bring these objects before individuals and churches likely to render material assistance, I want to gather as much information as possible in regard to the work done by the aided churches, often under very trying and difficult circumstances. In this effort I feel confident that I shall receive the cordial support of the officers and committees of the various Unions and Associations throughout the country. Any success which may result from this co-operation will, I trust, tend to strengthen the various Associations, and thus enable them to do the home mission work of their particular districts more efficiently and on a larger scale than heretofore.

"To be able effectively to state the case, it is desirable that I should be as fully informed as possible as to the kind of work that is being carried on, the need for it, and the difficulties attending it. Such information can best be supplied by those actually engaged in the work, and would be different in character from that supplied in answer to the ordinary questions put by the various Associations.

"I do not wish unduly to tax you in the matter, but if I am unable to obtain the required information by the means suggested, I trust you will allow me to avail myself of your local knowledge and influence.

"The large amount of attention and sympathy called forth for our work in London has been the result of simple statements as to the nature of the work and the necessity for it.

"Valuable help has been most generously given, and has tended very largely to greater efficiency, and it is in the hope of similar results following similar statements in regard to the counties that I venture to ask for your help.

"Wishing you and the ministers and churches in your Association all true prosperity,

"I am, very sincerely yours,
"ANDREW MEARNS."

A somewhat similar request has been sent to the pastors and evangelists at present aided, in the belief that, if their special difficulties and the means for meeting them "were clearly and fully stated to the Churches, there would be such a speedy and generous response as would cheer the hearts of all concerned."

The new arrangements as to the Society will naturally affect the CONGREGATIONAL MAGAZINE. While in no way departing from those features which have marked the Magazine during the past two years, and which have helped to increase its circulation and to enlarge its usefulness, it is hoped to deal more fully with various aspects of church-aid and home missionary work. For the present all communications for the Magazine should be addressed to the Rev. D. B. Hooke.

"COME, THOU SOUTH!"

IT was a radiant winter morning early in the year, and two gentlemen, who had just met in one of the busy streets of Montreal, were walking on together, and talking over a Missionary Meeting which both had attended the evening before. It had been one of great interest, and the facts brought forward, and the addresses given, had made a strong impression upon those who had heard them.

"—— And yet, after all," pursued Mr. Burns to his companion, "I could not but feel sorry to see men of learning and intelligence like Dr. —— and Mr. —— spending so much earnestness and enthusiasm on what must end in disappointment."

"In what way?" asked Mr. Redland quietly.

"Why, just think of it!" responded the other warmly. "Here has this Gospel been preached, and carried hither and thither, and spread by every possible means for 1800 years, and yet there is the world to-day—China, India, all the vast peoples of Asia, Africa, South America almost entire, and great part of the Northern Continent also, with most of the European nations—scarcely touched by its influence! How can it ever flood the earth in the way we heard spoken of last night? The thing is impossible, sir! and these good sanguine souls will find it out some day, to their sorrow."

Mr. Redland made some slight reply, and turning to the right, led towards the river wall, which, with its heavy buttresses, suffices in ordinary seasons, to keep the swollen spring torrent of the St. Lawrence within safe bounds. There were no turbulent waters now. The river lay calm and glittering before them in its frozen beauty. It was a wonderful scene. At their feet lay the well-trodden road on which long trains of waggons laden with hay were coming in from the country beyond the river, while scores of bright sleighs with flowing robes of bear or buffalo-skin, were carrying merry parties in every direction upon the ice.

"It looks solid, does it not?" said Mr. Redland at last, after silently watching for some moments the gay scene before them.

"Solid as the hills!" was the reply.

"And yet," he went on, "there are some people who are so sanguine as to believe that in three or four months' time, all this that we see will have utterly disappeared! And they actually expect that in its stead there will be a vast stretch of water bearing ships and boats of all kinds upon its bosom! Can you imagine such infatuation?"

There was a short pause; then holding out his hand to his friend, Mr. Burns said gravely, "Thank you! I see."

"Ah!" rejoined his companion, "No human might can effect either transformation. Both must be by the 'Breath' of the Lord."

Plymouth. C.

NEAR THE LORD'S TABLE.

No. IV.—"THE HAND OF HIM THAT BETRAYETH ME."

IT was about twelve months previous to this betrayal night that the Galilean ministry of Jesus Christ was darkened by a great backsliding on the part of the people (John vi. 66—71). The popular favour which had followed Him with enthusiastic admiration suddenly forsook Him; and "from that time many of His disciples went back, and walked no more with Him." It was a sad and sinful day; "even very dark, and no brightness in it." But, as though the day were not already dark enough, Christ turned round to the twelve and said—"And one of you is a devil." He seemed to have no pity on the sunless sky, and drew His hand across the last star, leaving nothing but the frozen gloom of despair. That was the first occasion of His calling attention to the evil presence of the traitor's hand; and this is the last time—to-night—"with Me on the table!"

Christ had recognised that hand from the beginning. He had seen its tell-tale grasp of greed as it handled the money; for two years He had seen it without speaking. He had looked on that hand as it received the generous bread from His own hand and gave it away to the hungry thousands, passing on the divine harvest from man to man like an angel of mercy. That hand had come near to Him many a time, had no doubt often touched Him in the interchanges and ministries of comradeship. Near, very near, it had been before; but to-night—"with Me on the table."

Christ had seen that hand, and still had kept it near Him. This is the splendid daring of Divine love—"give him another chance"! It is the heroism of a mother when her child is dying. The neighbours have hours ago seen the shadow of death in the painful eyes; the physician has gone away with a dumb sense of defeat; the father has heard the rustling of the frosty wings of the angel of the grave; but the mother is struggling and hoping still. Inch by inch she disputes the ground with Death. The petals of the flower of life fall down to the dust, and she stoops to gather them one by one, and tries to put the frail flower together again. Death has to go on its knees at last to conquer. Even so the pity of God finds it hard to yield and give up the stricken sinner. One more chance—and still one more! Sin has to kneel down and unclasp the arms of God from around the soul it means to damn. Jesus Christ did not drive the betrayer away till the last bitter moment; He let the hand remain till Satan filled the heart—"with Me on the table."

"That betrayeth *Me*." What harm had the Saviour done to him? If he had betrayed one of his fellow disciples it would not be so hard to explain the moral entanglement surrounding the crime. It is very likely that Peter had spoken some sharp and rankling words to him more than once; and John had not hesitated

to cast a heavy slur on his financial integrity—"because he was a thief." If he had betrayed Peter, or if he had betrayed John, the world would have found it easier to forgive him. But "Me"!—the harmless, the sinless, the helpless—the Friend of every man, the Brother of every woman. To betray Him who "lighteth every man that cometh into the world"—to betray Him who giveth rest to those that labour and are heavy-laden—to betray Him who "died to make us good"—this is the all but omnipotence of sin—cursèd omnipotence!

But the hand disappeared from the table. Judas knew at last that he had been found out. A wicked man can never forgive the pure and radiant eye that has seen through him. He can forgive himself for being a devil, but he cannot forgive another man for knowing that he is a devil. "He then having received the sop went immediately out." Out from the dazzling brilliancy of an unsullied Soul, and an all-pure glance—"and it was night." Night? What of that? The full moon of Eastertide was resting over the city and filling the landscape with the dreamy charm of fairyland—"and it was night"! The paschal chant was joyfully sung from house to house; the heart of Jerusalem was as glad as a festival song—"and it was night"! And thou, O brave traitor, hast earned the eternal gratitude of the councillor and the priest; who knows but thou mayest become their favourite agent of political intrigue?—"and it was night"! Then it is such a happy relief for thee to think that *He* is so utterly powerless; there is no one to defend Him and no one to avenge Him; of the people there is none with Him: thou art perfectly safe from any harm—"and it was night"! And there now! in thine hand are the thirty pieces of silver so easily won; count them over one by one, and let them glisten in the light of the moon—"and it was night"! Night—night! Night of moon and song without; winter's midnight cowering before storms of hell within. Ten thousand suns flashing in that forlorn sky would only make the gloom more frightful round his soul. From that dawnless darkness he tried to escape by rushing into "the outstretched arms of death"; but "it was night" still—and such a night!

> "Nor has the language of the earth a name
> For that surprise of terror and of shame."

There is another table in another City far, far away; and "the hand of him that betrayeth" is absent. The hand of him who denied and wept bitterly is to-day on that table of the new kingdom; for there is no denial and there is no weeping any more. The hand of many a one that forsook Him, and was sorry, and came back is also present; and there is no more forsaking, neither is there any more sorrowing of conscience. All who are now sitting down in the mansions of the Father's house were once in some quiet upper-chamber singing the hymn with Jesus. They went with Him to Gethsemane; they suffered and they prayed; and then came the welcome home to the Supper of the Lamb. And "there shall be no night there."

The world is yet making its choice between two hands which are on the table. There are many who choose the pierced hand of the betrayed Jesus to guide them in sorrow and sunshine; to help them in the suffering of Calvary, to bless them in the gladness of Olivet. Behold!—every true Christian can say—the hand of Him that loveth me is with me on the table. And, while His hand is on the table, the upper room will never be dark. But there are many who prefer the leading of the guilt-stained hand of the betraying Judas. They leave the Saviour, and only come back again after they have sold Him for gold. They pass out into the night, and they consider not that the dolorous way of the traitor never leads to the Land of Mornings. They will enter Gethsemane prayerless; and the cold betrayal kiss will keep them in an eternal Gethsemane—a Christless and hopeless Gethsemane, where no angel appears in the hour of agony.

> "Farewell, O Love, for thee and life I weep!
> Alas, my foolish heart! alas, my sin!
> Alas, for all the love I could not win!"

And alas! that the hand of the betrayer should have been once on the table—so near, so very near the Beloved of God. So near then: and now—so far, so very far. H. ELVET LEWIS.

Hull.

ADDRESSES TO YOUNG CONGREGATIONALISTS.

II.—JOINING A CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH *(concluded)*.

IN churches which are "managed" either by an individual holding an official position, or by a coterie of official or officious persons, there is a plain reason why the commonalty should have little interest in Church life and work. There may be, as a result of diligent pastoral, or more often "parsonical," visitation, or of specially attractive pulpit power, a relation strong enough between the congregation and the minister to maintain attendance at public worship; but there will be no *church*, no brotherhood, unless there be a common feeling of personal responsibility to Christ for its work, and of fraternity for its members.

Acting upon the proper motives which ought to actuate a young member, some share in the work ought to be accepted at once. In case it be not possible to accept one of the more regular positions in the school, or in mission, temperance, or district work, let some work less formal be undertaken. Let the prayer-meeting become your special care; prepare yourself diligently to take part in it; let the young sister take special interest in inducing persons to attend it. Be quick to observe strangers and to show them all Christian courtesy. Remark upon the absence from public worship of any you are acquainted with, or whose seat in the church is in near neighbourhood to yours, and let one of the deacons know. In some way or other, as circumstances will

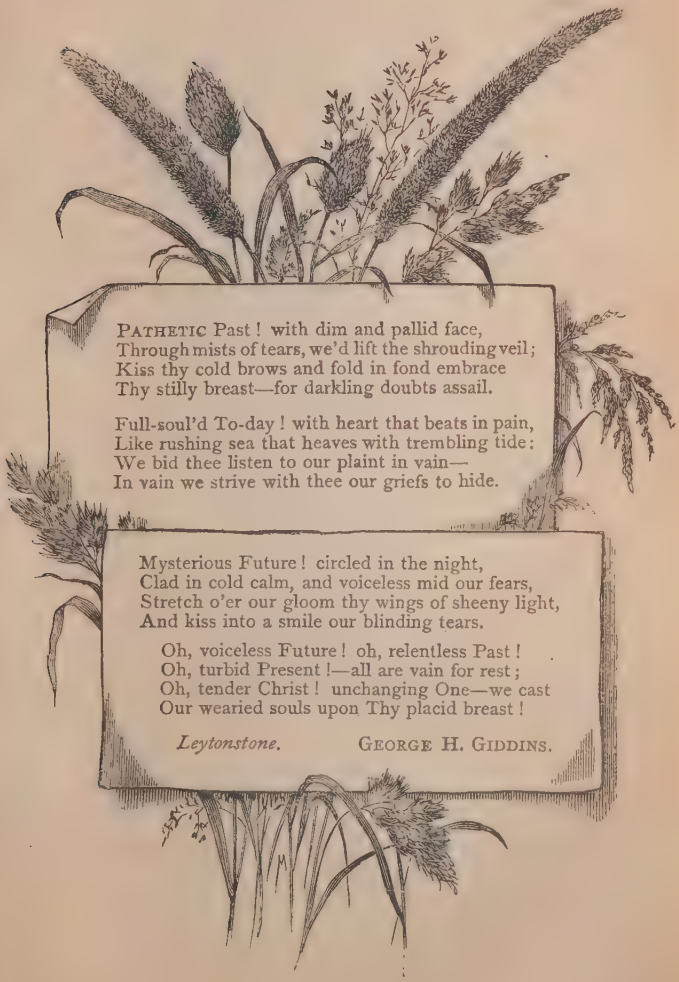
suggest, let a personal interest be taken in the welfare of the Church, and when no other service can be rendered, let there be a daily ministry of prayer on its behalf.

Let there be from the beginning regular attendance at the Church meetings and at the Lord's Supper, for they are the gatherings of the true fellowship of the Church as distinguished from the promiscuous congregational gatherings; and at the former let the position of a young member be governed by a nice appreciation of the obligations of Christian fraternity. The fact that the young have equal liberty of speech and equal voting power with the elders, will simply be a reason why an affectionate deference should be given to those whose experience and years entitle them to a hearing. The late Dr. Whewell, of Cambridge, used to say to the undergraduates attending his lectures, "Gentlemen, we are none of us infallible, not even the youngest of us." The gentle reproof contained in the expression will never be needed in the Church of Christ when His spirit regulates all hearts; but there will be diligent attention to all that is said and done, that those who are young to-day may gradually attain, and efficiently and honourably occupy, the position of trusted leaders among the brethren.

Especial attention ought to be given to the relations of young members to the pastor and officers of the church. It is reasonable that those who owe their special position in the church to the election of their brethren should expect, in the execution of their duty, a regard and sympathy at their hands, more cordial, free, and loyal than they could have claimed had they been appointed to their offices by some outside authority; and this expectation is further justified when they are careful only to assume such a position as is consistent with the principle of Congregationalism, when they do not desire to lord it over the charge allotted to them, when they disclaim any position or order in the church which would impugn the principle of the equality of rights on the part of every member of the brotherhood. On these grounds the minister of a church—the "servant of all," he should endeavour to be—can expect a measure of affectionate respect and sympathy which belongs to no other social relationship in life outside the inner circle of our own families. Seek to enter on such a relationship with your minister at once; it will add much to his happiness, and bind you in strong and practical sympathy with the church and its varied activities. I remember hearing of an aged minister who used to put this question to each person when publicly received into fellowship: "Do you promise to pray earnestly to God for *me?*" Put on such an occasion, and in the manner in which he would put it, it was a very touching question, and cast a flash of light upon the conditions of a successful ministry. Whether the question be put to you or not, make your membership at once real and effective, by constant prayer before the throne of grace for your brother who holds the anxious but highly responsible office of Christian minister and pastor.

Leytonstone. WM. PIERCE.

YESTERDAY—TO-DAY—FOR EVER.



PATHETIC Past! with dim and pallid face,
Through mists of tears, we'd lift the shrouding veil;
Kiss thy cold brows and fold in fond embrace
Thy stilly breast—for darkling doubts assail.

Full-soul'd To-day! with heart that beats in pain,
Like rushing sea that heaves with trembling tide:
We bid thee listen to our plaint in vain—
In vain we strive with thee our griefs to hide.

Mysterious Future! circled in the night,
Clad in cold calm, and voiceless mid our fears,
Stretch o'er our gloom thy wings of sheeny light,
And kiss into a smile our blinding tears.

Oh, voiceless Future! oh, relentless Past!
Oh, turbid Present!—all are vain for rest;
Oh, tender Christ! unchanging One—we cast
Our wearied souls upon Thy placid breast!

Leytonstone. GEORGE H. GIDDINS.

SHUT THE SHOP.

A SUNDAY AFTERNOON TALK WITH WORKING PEOPLE.

OME time ago a man who kept a small shop in one part of this town was sick and dying. He was not a religious man and had not lived the sort of life he could look back upon with pleasure. Anxious about his soul, and afraid to face the future, he sent for a man of God to read and pray with him.

A minister went. It was Sunday morning. When the minister reached the bedside of the dying man, by the side of which stood his weeping wife, he asked why they had sent for him. "Well sir," said the poor, distressed woman, "we think he is going to die, and we want you to read and pray with him for the good of his soul." "Do you really mean that?" asked the minister. "Are you in earnest about this matter?" Somewhat surprised at his apparent doubt, they assured him that they were truly anxious and earnest about the man. "Then," said the minister, "if you are in earnest and want to save his soul, why don't you *shut the shop?* As I came through I found it open for business. How can I believe you are sincere about this man's soul, when you have the place open to break God's Sabbath?" "O sir," said she, "wait a bit." Then, running down stairs, she hastily put up the shutters. Returning to the bed-room, she said, "That shop shall never be open again on the Sunday."

That was one way of getting the shop shut. I wish I knew how to get many besides that one closed. I am not come here to enter upon a crusade against Sunday trading. But I wish the shops were shut for all that. Walk through Birmingham on Sunday, especially in the more crowded districts, and if you believe in Sunday as a day of rest, apart altogether from the question of Sabbatarianism, you will be shocked to see how many places are open for the transaction of business. Barbers' shops into which idle, dirty fellows go to be shaved who were too busy at the public-house on Saturday to think of their beards. I almost wish I could have my way with these men. I would have their heads shaved instead of their faces.

Then there are the cigar shops impudently open, many of them I fear for other and worse purposes than the sale of "smokes." Provision shops and shops of all sorts do all the business they can. I wonder that our watch committee and newspapers do not give a little more attention to these matters. Balloting, both at bazaars and public-houses, has been stopped in this town. Why not say to all greedy people who are carrying on unnecessary business on Sundays, "Now, then, you must shut the shop"?

Then, too, I think we should be no worse, perhaps a good deal better, if the town authorities would stop the street cries which disturb the peace and quiet of the Sunday. Why should we have "water cress," "pikelets," newspapers, and I know not what else besides, shouted from Sunday morning to Sunday evening by people

who in the main seem to have lungs of leather, if one may judge them by the noise they can make? Why should the Salvation Army make Sunday hideous by the horrible noise of its drums and trumpets and all the other instruments of its Nebuchadnezzar's band? Why should our ears be split by the unmusical, unnecessary, never-ending toll of some of the things called bells in the various church steeples? I think "the powers that be" should arise, shake themselves from their sleep, and say to all these offenders against public quiet and rest, "It is time for you all to 'shut the shop.'"

But there are shops of other kinds I should like to see shut up.

There is the Swearer's shop. Of all shops this is most unnecessary, most useless, and, in some respects, most shocking. I recollect once hearing of a man in Sheffield who was condemning swearing and got very warm at his work. "Why," said he, "in these days swearing is a common thing. You can hear children cursing and swearing in the streets *before they can either walk or talk.*" In Birmingham, at any rate, we are not *quite* so bad as that. Still I have heard both men and boys, and, I am sorry to say, women and girls, too, using language which, to say the least, is far more expressive of vulgarity than of politeness.

I remember some time ago, being chairman at a meeting at which a young man was to sing a song. I noticed that, whilst he was trying to sing, he opened his mouth rather wide and shut his eyes. How I did wish he would just reverse things. It would have been much better for the meeting if he had opened his eyes to see how soft he looked, and then at once have shut his shop.

In a workshop one day a man made his appearance with a plaster on his nose. He was a foul-mouthed man. During that day he used his usual quantity of oaths and cursing. At length, quite tired of hearing him, a fellow-workman said, "Hang it, Jack! the doctor has made a mistake. He has put the plaster on your nose, and it ought to have been on your mouth." There are many cases in which I think a plaster might be useful.

Then there is the Talker's shop. This is a big place, and does a large business. Of all pests in these modern days the talker is one of the worst. He is found everywhere. At the club, the committee meeting, and in the workshop. I dare say you know him well. This class of man reminds me very forcibly of a bell, which has but little inside it except tongue. It is a pity to see men of this stamp, who are as empty as the clock case, but have voices as loud as the town clock. Less talk and more work is the word for these men. When your neighbour is out of work what he needs is not your talk but your help. When the man next door to you is sick, it is nonsense for you to give him a dose of tongue and talk. Instead of that take in a loaf or two of bread for the little ones. Let your wife make a nice rice pudding for the man himself, and you will find that his heart will be so full of gratitude that he won't be able to thank you because of the lumps which will come into his throat. To all mere talkers, I say, "Work a bit more. Give your tongues a holiday, and just for a while shut the shop."

Then there is the Drinker's shop. This has been open so long that it seems a hard task to get it shut. But we are marching on. Time is coming in which the hour will strike. Already the shop is closed in many parts of the Kingdom on the Lord's day. And the supporters of the system are beginning to cry out most loudly. Their craft is in danger. Let them alone.

I remember hearing a story of a preacher who went to conduct service in a country chapel on a Sunday afternoon. There were not many present, but that made no difference to the preacher. He was at all times somewhat longwinded, but on this particular occasion he had but little to say, and, as is usual in such cases, he took longer time in which to say it. He was one of that class of preachers who always face the audience with closed eyes. When he had got well in to his work, he began to move in the pulpit. Little by little he turned from facing the people to facing the wall, but as his eyes were shut he did not know of the ridiculous position into which he had moved himself. The worst part of the whole thing was that he went on talking past the time at which to close the service. As there seemed no sort of likelihood that he meant to stop until, like the clock, he was quite run down, the people began, one by one, to move quietly out of the building. They were soon all gone except the chapel keeper. At length he got quite worn out, and began to fear it might be time for evening service before he could get his tea. So taking the keys of the chapel in his hand, he walked with noiseless tread up the pulpit steps, and soon stood on the top one. Then with a trembling hand he pulled the parson's coat, and putting the keys on the ledge he said: "If you please, sir, when you have done, you will perhaps shut up and lock the door; it is time for me to go, as I am wanted elsewhere."

Just so. This is exactly what I want you men to say. "Shut up and lock the door, it is time for me to go, as I am wanted elsewhere." No greater blessing could come to this nation than *to shut and lock the door of its public-house.* Only thus will brighter days dawn upon these isles. Stop the drinking, and you may turn three-fourths of your lunatic asylums into convalescent homes for the sick poor. You will then be able to close half your prisons and have but little use for the other half. Shut the public-house and you may make half your workhouses into museums and art galleries, and half your policemen into the caretakers for them. Make England sober and you may make three-fourths of your magistrates into Members of Parliament if you like, for they will not be needed at home. Lock this wide gate and you will soon change the "bitter cry" of the starving poor into a song of thanksgiving, settle the question of overcrowding, and banish bad trade and want of work from our midst. And I want all you men, and women too, to help us to do all this.

Men, it is "*time for you to go, as you are wanted elsewhere.*" Yes, it is quite time, time to quit your bad ways, to turn your backs upon Boniface, and leave him to shut up the shop.

"You are wanted elsewhere." I want to see you in your own little homes, sober, clothed, and in your right mind, sitting at the feet of Jesus. Many of those little cottages are like little deserts. Some of your wives are pictures of poverty. Whilst many of your lads and lasses are unable to go to the Sunday School to-day because they have no decent things in which to go. Think of this. Your loving boy, as bright, as sharp, as worthy, and as loved by the Saviour as your neighbour's son. Yet the other lad has his Sunday suit and goes to school to learn the word of life, whilst yours is deprived of these comforts and blessings, all through no fault of his. It is simply because his father drinks. For the children's sake, as well as for your own, I plead with you to get on your knees and ask God to give you strength, and help you to become sober, religious men.

"You are wanted elsewhere." I want to see you at the savings bank and building club. I know that when you have done your best and paid your way, it is not much that most of you have over. But I should like to see you making some sort of provision for rainy days and old age. Get into some club or insurance society.

"You are wanted elsewhere." I want to see you at the house of God. I want to see the toiling masses of my countrymen brought to a saving knowledge of God's salvation by Jesus Christ. Ah! if you but knew it, that great heart of God beats in sympathy for you. Jesus of Nazareth, Himself a toiler and a poor man, is the Friend of the toiler to day. It is true that He no longer walks this earth in bodily form as in the days of old. But He is really present with us for all that.

I fear that we have all had wrong impressions respecting Him. We have heard of His death. And we have been told of His resurrection and ascension. But somehow or another we have come to think of Him either as a dead Christ, or as a Christ living somewhere among the clouds in a place we know very little about.

My good friends, I frankly tell you that I don't want a dead Saviour. I need a living One. I want a Saviour who will speak to me every day, every hour, and who will let me speak to Him. I want a Christ who understands my peculiarities, who pities my ignorance, and who comes to me in hours of darkness and sorrow, and gently wipes away the tear, and whispers words of cheer and hope. Before I was out of my teens I found just such a Friend and Saviour. In those early years I was led to see that Christ would be my daily companion.

It is just this great truth I want you to feel. Jesus wants you, will save, and always help you. Is your lot a hard one? So was His, and He will sustain you. Have you to bear great temptation? So had He. Do you fear your friends will laugh at you? So did His. Are you poor? So was He.

> "In every pang that rends the heart,
> The man of sorrows had a part;
> He sympathises with our grief,
> And to the sufferer sends relief."

Carry home this one thought, if you forget all else—that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Saviour of men, lives among toiling, struggling men to-day. He stands by the man who pushes the plane, who swings the smith's hammer, who sits at the jeweller's bench, who walks among the rattling machinery, or who burrows away down in the dark, damp mine. He is your Friend now, and wants to be so always. His hand will hold you. His voice will cheer. His love will save.

Birmingham. CHARLES LEACH.

JAMES HERBERT'S DIARY;

Or, Experiences with Seekers after God.

By the Rev. ROBERT TUCK, B.A., Author of "Netley Independent Chapel," "Links Wanted," &c.

VI.—WAITING FOR FEELINGS.

UCH more was made of "feelings" in the older ideas of a religious conversion than is made now-a-days; but we meet still with cases in which "waiting for feelings," striving to get right feelings, and anxious watching of feelings, become very serious practical hindrances to seekers. The older custom of requiring a detail of experiences from all candidates for church membership tended to exaggerate the importance of good feelings, and to make the soul rest in something of its own rather than wholly upon Christ.

Our young people now have very little idea of the ordeal through which many of us had to pass in our early days. In the life of that honoured pastor, the Rev. Jonathan Glyde, of Bradford, the letter is preserved which he wrote when asking for church membership, and a few sentences from it will show our readers what importance was attached fifty years ago to good feelings. He writes:—"If my heart does not greatly deceive me, I feel at present deep humility before God, leading me oftentimes to abhor, and habitually to distrust, myself. My holiest moments are impure, my strength is perfect weakness, and in Christ alone is my help found. I have felt Him to be the 'chief among ten thousand, and the altogether lovely'; and though my feelings vary, yet I trust, through His spirit working in me, 'the love of Christ constraineth me,' leading me to hate sin because He died to purge me from it, and to love holiness because it will assimilate me to Him. Such, my dear sir, are my present feelings and desires; and by comparing them with the description of the renewed man given in Scripture, I am led to hope that I am a disciple of Christ."

James Herbert learned, out of one of his experiences with seekers, that old-fashioned methods of conversion still survive; that old forms of hindrance are still felt, and that the minister of Christ

must never decide on the ways in which he is sure the Holy Ghost *must* work. No matter what may be the forms of life and thought in a particular age, the minister must be simply observant and watchful of the Spirit's working, prepared to fit, wisely and helpfully, into every method, old or new.

The experience to which we now refer is thus recorded in the diary:—

"I have recently had to deal with an anxious seeking soul, whose experiences and difficulties have vividly recalled to my mind the strugglings and hindrances of my own early religious life. Somewhat foolishly, no doubt, I had recently allowed myself to think that the Holy Spirit's ways of convicting and converting are quite modern and fresh, and I fear lest I should have been unduly anxious to fit my influence and my words to what I have thought of as His *new* methods. I have been learning that souls think and feel and seek much the same in every age; and that they who 'watch for souls' must be wisely old-fashioned as well as judiciously new-fashioned; for some souls find their way to God much as our fathers found it, while others reach rest and home in God by paths of which our fathers obtained no glimpse.

Mrs. Rose is a young married woman; her husband is one of our members; they have no family; and though she has been interested in our services, I have watched in vain for signs of her awaking to personal religious anxiety. A few Sunday evenings ago, after a sermon in which I was enabled to plead very earnestly for an immediate surrender to Christ, she came into the vestry to see me, evidently in great distress of mind. I felt very hopeful about her, assured that she would very soon find light and peace. But I was disappointed in her. She had taken up the idea that she must *feel* something, and that she must wait until these good feelings came. The eye was turned inward that should have been looking outward, fixed wholly on Jesus.

There is no hindrance more difficult to deal with than that which comes through "introspection," the anxious watching of "frames and feelings." It is a sign of self-love, and it must be utterly broken down ere the soul will go out of itself to find its rest in Christ. But the breaking down is always a long and trying business. With Mrs. Rose my pleadings seemed quite in vain; and for months she was hopelessly miserable, waiting for good feelings that never came; putting her desire for experiences, and her trust in experiences, right in the way of her salvation.

Wondering how I could meet her case and help her, I one day turned over the pages of Spencer's "Pastor's Sketches," and found Dr. Spencer pleading with a woman who was in the same spiritual state as Mrs. Rose, in this very forcible way, "If, after all, you do need any deeper impressions, I will tell you *how* you may get them, and you will get them in no other way. You will get them *just when* you aim to do as God bids you, to repent, to flee to Christ, to give God your heart. At present you are excusing yourself from all this by the false notion that you have not impressions enough

to be able to do so. You do not, this moment, feel condemned for neglecting the great salvation, because you think you cannot attain it till you have deeper convictions. This is your excuse. And it is all a deception, in my opinion. But, if you do need more deep convictions, you will get them when you aim to come to Christ. Then you will find you have no *heart* to do it, no *will* to do it, no readiness to deny yourself, and renounce the world; and then you will begin to see what an undone and helpless sinner you are, and how much you have need to pray for God's help, as you are *not* doing now. This is the way to gain deeper impressions, if you need them, and the *only* way. Five years more of waiting, or fifty years, will not give them to you."

I was so impressed by the searching and arousing character of these sentences that I resolved I would speak to Mrs. Rose in a similar strain at my next meeting with her.

That meeting was sought by her, and not by me. She was very regular in her attendance at our week-night services, but one evening I missed her. Soon after I reached home she came to my house. She was in deep distress because, do what she would, she could not *feel* as she wished to feel. She told me that she did not dare to attend the service that night, and she had now come to me in despair, feeling as if I must do something for her.

I could not speak those severe things which I had planned to say. It seemed as if I must just set Jesus before her, and demand an immediate and entire acceptance of Him. That was the thing given me to say; and, as I spoke to her, the following very striking incident came to my mind: A lady once told her minister what efforts she had made to obtain salvation, how she had read and prayed, but still seemed as far from peace as ever. He told her that it was not by anything she could do, but by what Christ had long since done and finished on the cross, that she could be saved. All seemed dark and mysterious to her, and she left, resolving, however, to call on a friend who had recently been converted. She did so, and asked her what she had done to obtain the peace she spoke of. "Done! I have done nothing! it is by what Christ has done that I have found peace with God." The lady replied that this was what the minister had just been telling her, but that she could not understand it. She went home with her distress greatly increased, and shutting herself up in her room, she fell on her knees, resolving that she would never rise till her soul found rest and peace. How long her agonies continued it is impossible to say, but nature became exhausted and she sank to slumber. While thus asleep she dreamed that she was falling over a frightful precipice, but caught hold of a single twig, which overhung the abyss beneath. By this she hung, crying aloud for help, when a voice from below, which she knew to be the voice of Jesus, bade her let go the twig, and He would receive and save her. "Lord, save me!" she cried, but the voice again answered, "Let go the twig." She felt as though she dare not leave hold, but continued crying, "Lord, save me!" At last the One below, whose voice

she heard but whom she did not see, said in the most tender, solemn tones, "I cannot save you unless you let go the twig." At last she let it go, fell into the arms of Jesus, and the joy of finding herself there awoke her. The lesson taught her by her dream was not lost upon her. She perceived that Jesus was worthy of *all* her trust and that not only did she need no twig of self-dependence, but that it was holding to the twig that kept her away from Christ. She let go, and found Jesus all-sufficient.

I saw this arrested her attention, and seemed to meet her case so, without saying any more, I asked her to join me in prayer. I shall never forget the changed face that smiled on me as we rose from our knees; or the "joy unspeakable" that breathed in her words, as she said, so simply,—"I see it now. It is Jesus only. I need wait for nothing. He can do it all."

I thank God greatly for that experience with Mrs. Rose. Adapting the Gospel truth to different dispositions has become to me a more comprehensive and searching thing than it hitherto has been. We must preach the need for right feeling, for repentance, humility, desire, watching, and so on; for through very deep feelings some do reach Christ. But there is a side of danger in such preachings and teachings. The demand for feelings may become a hindrance to some seeking souls. We know well that many are kept back by subtle trustings in what they can *do*, but perhaps even more are turned aside by trusting in what they can *feel*.

Henceforth I want to see for myself more clearly, and to set before others more fully, that the first right feeling is affection and admiration for Christ. All other needed good feelings will follow on close personal relations with Him. So the healthiest thing, in dealing with seekers, must be to set Christ first, to win trust for Him, and to leave all attempts at fostering mere feelings.

Thinking of this reminds me of a sermon I heard many years ago from Mr. Spurgeon, which seemed to me to be quite a model of Christian preaching. The text was, "This is my beloved, and this is my friend," and each part of the sermon was a simple setting forth of some phase of the glory and attractiveness of Christ, each section being closed with the pathetic persuasion, "This is *my* beloved, and *my* friend, will you not make Him *yours?*"

Sometimes the seeking souls say to us, "I thought I must *do* something." At other times they say to us, "I thought I must *feel* something." And we really have but the one answer for them all. "No, no, you must be *looking off unto Jesus*, the Author and Finisher of our faith."

> "Nothing in my hand I bring,
> Simply to *Thy* cross I cling.
> All for sin could not atone,
> Thou must save, and Thou alone."

AN INACCURATE STATEMENT.

A VERY remarkable misstatement has appeared where we should not have expected to have found it—in the *Evangelical Christendom*, the monthly organ of the Evangelical Alliance. It is there stated, on the authority of the Rev. W. Walsh, "that a very large number of Nonconformist chapels had passed into the hands of the Bishop of London's Fund, because the voluntary system did not pay in poorer districts." To say the least, it is wonderfully inconsistent for anyone, while commending such a purely voluntary movement as the Bishop of London's Fund, to attack the principle to which the Fund itself owes everything. The very existence of that Fund shows the inefficiency of the Establishment to meet the growing religious wants of London, and that it has to be supplemented by "a voluntary system." The statement of Mr. Walsh has, however, been clearly shown to be as inaccurate as it is inconsistent; and we have yet to learn of nonconforming chapels being transferred in the way indicated. In fact, when taken to task, Mr. Walsh has himself admitted the inaccuracy of the statement, and withdrawn it. We trust that this fact will be noted by the Editor of the *Evangelical Christendom.*

THE YOUNG FOLKS' CORNER.

MOTHER'S APRON STRINGS.

NO one can help admiring the noble reply and manly spirit shown in the following incident:

"Charley, Charley!" clear and sweet as a note struck from a silver bell, the voice rippled over the Common.

"That's mother," cried one of the boys, and he instantly threw down his bat and picked up his jacket and cap.

"Don't go yet! Have it out!"

"Finish this game! Try it again!" cried the players.

"I must go—right off—this minute. I told her I'd come whenever she called."

"Make believe you didn't hear!" they exclaimed.

"But I did hear."

"She won't know you did."

"But I know it, and—"

"Let him go," said a bystander. "You can't do anything with him; he is tied to his mother's apron strings."

"That's so," said Charles, "and it's to what every boy ought to be tied, and in a hard knot, too."

"I wouldn't be such a baby as to run the minute she called."

"I don't call it babyish to keep one's word to his mother," answered the obedient boy, a beautiful light glowing in his blue eyes. "I call that manly; and the boy who don't keep his word to her will never keep it to any one else—you see if he does," and he hurried away to his cottage home.

Thirty years have passed since those boys played on the Common. Charley Grey is a prosperous business man in a great city, and his mercantile friends say of him that his word "is his bond.'

We asked him how he acquired such a reputation. "I never broke my word when a boy, no matter how great the temptation, and the habits formed then have clung to me through life."

THE TEACHERS' PAGE.

INTERNATIONAL LESSONS FOR SEPTEMBER.

As the Review Sunday comes in this month, there are only three Scripture Lesson subjects provided.

The first gives us a *last glimpse of Elijah.* It had been a marked feature of his life that, after executing some mission for God, he was suddenly caught up and borne away. And this was to be the impression left concerning him to the very last. When his life mission was done, he was to be suddenly carried away and no more seen. As *fire* had been his great symbol of God's presence and power, fire-symbols at his translation were to show that God had accepted his faithful servant, and taken him to Himself.

We may impress that God never forsakes His faithful servants. In the "valley" His "rod and staff comfort." We may even show that God *honours* His servants in their endings, permitting them, in the very manner and spirit of their deaths, to seal the testimony of their lives. Elijah's translation revives the great cry of Carmel, "Jehovah, He is the God! Jehovah He is the God!"

In the account of the translation careful notice should be taken of the blending of the natural and the supernatural. The narrative speaks of the whirlwind as the agency, but we have to say of Elijah as of Enoch, "He was not, for God took him."

In the same lesson we are *introduced to Elisha.* He is, indeed, mentioned before, but now we first begin to know his character, and what may be called the *genius* of the work which he had to do for God in the world. We may see his loyalty to his master Elijah shewn in his determination not to leave him. But the most striking thing about Elisha is his marked difference, in temperament and ability, from Elijah. At first it seems impossible to think of him as "the right man in the right place." But we often find that God changes the character of His agents for the very purpose of carrying on His work better. It is so in pulpits, and in Sunday school classes. Warlike Joshua succeeds meek Moses. Peaceful Solomon follows tempest-tossed David. The gentle Lord Jesus takes up the work of stern John. God gives gifts according to his good pleasure, and fits each one to his place. We should cheerfully say concerning ourselves,—"I am where God has placed me, and I have only one thing to think about, How can an honoured servant be found faithful?"

It should be shewn that in the character and mission of Elisha we have a sort of foreshadowing of the spirit and the gracious life-work of the Lord Jesus Christ, everybody's Helper and Friend.

The second lesson (II Kings iv. 18-37) shews us *the influence exerted by Elisha in his own land.* We see the power that is exerted by noble and beautiful personal character. It wins trust; so that we are sure to seek out the *good people* in our times of trouble. Elisha's miracles are gracious helpings of people in their troubles, rather than "wonders," and so we find in them much more than usual of human agency and effort. Elisha helps us to realise God's presence and grace in our common everyday life.

The third lesson (II Kings v. 1-16) illustrates *Elisha's influence on foreigners*; and reminds us that our God is the God of the whole earth. No matter where the good man is, he must be a *missionary* as well as a witness. And Elisha teaches us that we must not let the outside impression of our God be only that He is a God of Judgment. We must make men see and feel that He is the God of life, of healing and of mercy. "He healeth all our diseases."

In looking over the lessons of the quarter, our chief point for impression may be this—Evils are sure to follow, and afflict both ourselves and others, if we *take a wilful course*, and act in life without seeking wisdom and guidance from God.

But this point will be found to open the way for showing—

1. The mystery of the Divine goodness, that wilful people should be so wisely restrained, and so efficiently punished. God always keeps a *tether* on wilful people.

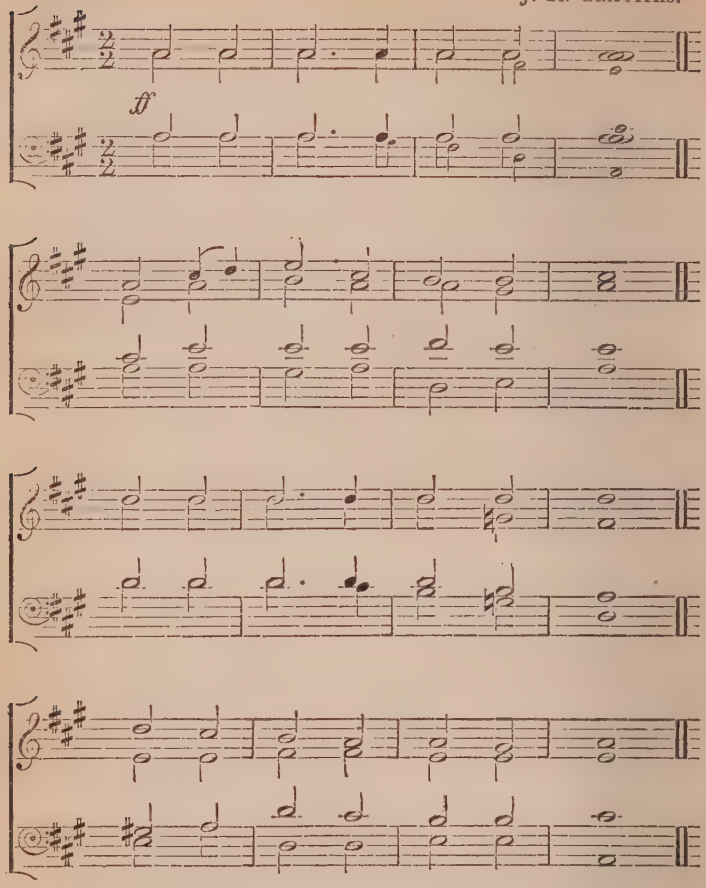
2. The duty of keeping both the claims and the goodness of God before the wilful. Just this was the mission of Elijah, and also of Elisha.

3. God works His work of grace in the world sometimes by "Fire," or Elijahs; and sometimes by "still small voice," or Elishas. So we can all serve our God in the use of just those powers and abilities which He has entrusted to us.

ROBERT TUCK.

King of kings, and Lord of lords!

J. R. Griffiths.



The *small* notes in first line are for Organ only.

King of kings, and Lord of lords!
What delight the sound affords;
Jesus shall for ever reign,
Final victory He shall gain.

Lord of lords, and King of kings!
Earth with loud hosanna rings;
None shall of His rule complain
When the Saviour comes to reign.

King of kings, and Lord of lords!
Broken are oppression's cords;
Hell is conquered! swell the strain!
Jesus doth for ever reign.

Lord of lords, and King of kings
Order, riches, rest, He brings;
Warfare, hatred, fear shall cease,
Vanquished by the Prince of Peace]

King of kings, and Lord of lords!
Earth and heaven repeat the words;
Truth and love will He restore;
He shall reign for evermore.

Lord of lords, and King of kings!
Loud and long the anthem rings;
Hallelujah! Shout again!
Jesus shall for ever reign.

Newman Hall.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

By J. Jackson Wray.

PART II.

"THE land of my affliction."* That is the name he gives to Egypt; and one glance at the early part of his history there is quite enough to show how apt a name it was. He entered the land against his will. He was torn away from his native land by those who bought him from his brothers with silver coin, and as soon as he trod the soil of Egypt he knew that he was a slave. He, the proud and precious pet of his doting father; he, whose lines and lot had been cast in the pleasantest of places; he, whose heritage from childhood upward was of the goodliest sort; he, whose young life had been as free and as light as the air of the wilderness, was a bondslave in the land of Egypt. He had lost for ever, as it seemed, the voices of love and friendship, and, as it seemed, was doomed for ever to hear the voice of stern command. Verily, it was at once the "land of his affliction"!

Neither did those days bring any amendment of his lot. Through what hardships he passed before he found a home in the house of Potiphar, history does not tell us; true, he dwelt in a palace, and was surrounded with wealth, but it was only a gilded slavery. He was at the mercy of an unprincipled mistress and an angry and vengeful master; and the palace was soon exchanged for a prison and all the horrors of an Egyptian jail. Within these gloomy walls he passed many a year of hardship, many a year of heart-break and of shame. If in these dark days in Joseph's history it had been possible to quote the golden text in his ear, "All things work together for good to them that love God," I think the poor ill-used and unjustly-handled slave would have found hard work to believe it; and would have been sorely tempted to deny it altogether. At that time Egypt was a land of wealth, a land of grandeur and a land of power; but poor Joseph in chains, in disgrace, in exile, in prison, in captivity, can call it nothing but "the land of my affliction"; and very sad, and very long, and very bitter that affliction was! A land of suffering, a dry land, with never a kindly spring to quench the thirst of his drooping soul! Well, now, it did seem—did it not?—that, to Joseph, this land of his affliction must perforce be for ever a land of barrenness. There seemed little probability, hardly a possibility, that things

* "And the name of the second called he Ephraim: For God hath caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction."—Gen. xli. 52.

would ever mend. The prison bolts were shot upon him by an offended woman of the kind that never forgives. The prison chains were put upon him by a powerful prince who was never likely to look upon his supposed crime with lessening wrath. The prisoner had not a single friend in all the Egyptian Empire to plead his cause. Humanly speaking, it would have been safe to predict that he would be left to live and die and rot with an Egyptian jail for a grave when living and when dead! Better a thousand times that the lie of his brothers had been the truth, and that "a wild beast had devoured him" and had left the torn and blood-stained coat of many colours as the only record of his fate!

Time passes: time, with its magic wand; time, which is ever and always the tool of the Wonder-worker who sits on the Eternal throne. Time, in His hands, drops the chains from Joseph's limbs; unbars the bolts that stop his exit, flings wide the doors between him and freedom, opens the gates of Pharaoh's palace, leads him to the steps of Pharaoh's throne, gives him a princely seat at Pharaoh's side, gives him another and a nobler throne in the hearts of the grateful Egyptians whom he saves from famine. At length, when two sons are born to him by a daughter of Pharaoh's royal house, "Joseph calls the name of the first-born Manasseh: For God, said he, hath made me forget all my toil, and all my father's house. And the name of the second called he Ephraim: For God hath caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction."

Now that he can look back on all the way in which the Lord hath led him, he perceives that the fruitful season for him began when he was made a slave. The silver seed was sown in his brothers' palm. It was the captive of the Ishmaelites that became the captain of the Egyptians. It was Potiphar's prisoner that became Pharaoh's prime minister. The very dungeon in which he suffered was the soil in which his future prosperity struck root. It budded in the jailor's friendship, expanded in the butler's recovered freedom, blossomed in Pharaoh's presence, spread its fair branches in Pharaoh's court, and scattered its fruit through all the rejoicing land!

Now, my dear friends, does not the practical bearing of this text stand out upon the surface of it? Here the golden and gracious story stands upon the sacred page, and, if it stood alone by itself as an independent story, the chapter might well have for its title, "*The land of affliction becomes the land of fruit.*"

Many who read this are feeling the pressure of the times very sorely. The six days of the week are one continuous and anxious toiling and spinning, and all to so little purpose that Saturday evening finds you with no more resources, and sometimes even less than when Monday morning sent you on your bootless quest. I have a message for you this morning, such as will brace you to meet another Monday, and give you hopeful heart-cheer for another week. There are some who have fears and anxious premonitions and forebodings, either as to themselves or as to others, equally, if not more dear, connected with health and life and circumstance; and so,

in some way or other, hearts and homes are gloomed with coming events that seem to be casting their shadows before. Just now, to all such, the present is the "land of their affliction." Well, so far as the sympathy of my heart can go, and so far as a brother's aid can go, I claim to be with the baffled tradesman in his uncustomed shop; with the perplexed agent in the office, scarce trodden by a client; with the workless workman, whose hands would gladly seize the idle tool; with the all-but breadless sempstress, whose needle rusts for lack of labour; with the anxious heart, which, from whatever cause, comes burdened to the house of God to-day. But what can I say? What can I do to strengthen your shoulder, or lighten your burden, to lift your spirit, and to cheer your heart?

First of all, I have to say that from the beginning until now, it has been true all the time, and must be true hence on, that "God over all for ever reigns." There was a time in the history of that awful struggle for life in the United States of America, when collapse seemed imminent, and the City of New York was in peril of civil war, bringing red ruin and death on its surging waves. One voice, the voice of James Garfield, smote on the ears of an excited crowd, which surged along the streets howling for vengeance as it went. "Fellow citizens!" said he, "clouds and darkness are round about Him! Righteousness and judgment are the habitation of His throne. Mercy and justice shall go before His face. God reigns, and the Government at Washington still lives!" As when the Saviour's voice did hush the raging waves of Galilee, so those brave words did strike a silence through the passionate mob and hushed it into peace. On this point, on this Rock of Truth, Jehovah's faithful ones can rest themselves and their affairs for ever. However hard the times, however lowering the sky, whatever storm of war, or black cloud of social disquiet, whatever "land of affliction" may be our weary and unrestful lot, whatever clouds and darkness may hide from us the throne of Eternal love and power, God reigns! and the Government of Providence still lives!

> "Blind unbelief is sure to err,
> And scan His work in vain;
> God is His own Interpreter,
> And He will make it plain!"

When the chain of gold was flung by Pharaoh on Prince Joseph's neck, he saw the reason why Potiphar was permitted to fasten the fetters on his feet. God had become His own Interpreter; He had made it plain that the stone floor of a prison could be the first step to a throne; and that a "land of affliction" could become a land of fruitfulness, a place of broad rivers and streams.

I charge you by the grace of God, by the love of Jesus, by the faithful fellowship of the Good Spirit, hold firm and fast to the steadfast Throne of Eternal Wisdom, Love and Power! There are many voices besides that of Job's wife, which would whisper the fatal and traitorous counsel, "Curse God and die!" The voice of pain, the voice of poverty, the voice of harassed minds and blasted hopes are all pressed into Satan's service to shout the wild

edicts of doubt and the rash verdicts of despair. Let your voice thunder a "No, by the help of God!" which shall strike a silence through them all, and, like the grand old patriarch, who dwelt in the "land of affliction" for a far longer and far more bitter space than you, cry: "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him;" and like him, the Lord shall bless you at the latter end more than at the beginning; for still and ever is this word true: "Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth him out of them all!"

This also will I say to you, ye who dwell for a period in the land of affliction, that Time, who seems in so many respects to be our tyrant, working on us his rough and resistless will, is still only the tool of Providence, and must work out the ends and purposes of Him whose instrument it is. You can turn no barren land into a land of plenty, can make no dreary waste to laugh with harvest without time and tools. With God, Time is the tool, and to-day is made to take hold upon the outcomes of yesterday, in order to give them some new shape for to-morrow.

Two years ago I visited a large northern town, when all was stagnation, starvation, and distress; and the cry was that their day was past and that things must go from bad to worse. Well, so they did; but, strange to say, God's Providence gave a sudden twist to the Tool of Time, and already the million shuttles are flying across busy looms, keeping time to the music of labour's cheery song. It has been so through all the ages. After midnight, morning; after snowdrifts, springtides; after hard times, good ones; after the land of affliction, the land of fruit. The French people have a proverb to the effect that nothing is likelier to happen than the improbable; and of nothing does history speak more clearly than that improbabilities have developed quickly into certainties and so-called impossibilities have become hard facts. I venture to say, on the strength of my unwavering faith in this book, that this line of argument has an added weight a thousand-fold for the man and woman who knows that the Tool of Time is held in the hands of a Wonder-worker, who is also a King who has their loyalty, a Father who has their love, a Redeemer who has their trust, a Friend whose faithfulness wins for Him all their fidelity.

I will say this also, that the "land of affliction" is in itself capable of being a true and genuine time and place of good to those who dwell in it. How many there are who can say, "Before I was afflicted I went astray;" "It is good for me that I have been afflicted, for I have learned Thy statutes." The bee sucks sweet honey out of bitter herbs, and many a child of God has found his sweetest experiences in the land of affliction. When the night is darkest the stars shine brightest, and the sky that stretches over the land of affliction is often jewelled with all manner of such precious stones. All the history and experience of the Christian Church demonstrates this truth, that the land of its affliction has ever and always been the land of its fruitfulness.

GLEANINGS FROM MANY FIELDS.

On the Victory of Truth.—The truth of God will win its way in the world surely. Its final acceptance is certain. Yes, but the fact does not excuse us from doing our best to secure its victory. The time of its absolute success may depend, in the divine providence, upon the rendering or withholding of our personal labours in its behalf; and even so slight a delay, as it seems to us that the lack of our co-operation can cause, may be a terrible evil to more worlds than our own. The truth will win in the end, but will not, must not, our respective shares in the glory and the joy of the final, blessed consummation, be determined by the proportionate willingness or reluctance to work for the Master which we who profess to belong to Him now shall have manifested? Then the happiest spirits will be they who here did not think much of sharing the honours of victory; but who thought often and earnestly how they could make their powers and influence—no matter how humble—tell most in aiding the success of the divine kingdom among men, even if they could serve only by helping to remove hindrances.

The Lighted Way.

One, dying, said, "It is not far to go,
And all the way with love is lighted clear."
O sweetest soul, whose heaven lay so near
That all thy life was radiant from its glow!
For thee, and for us all, God meant it so;
That His most perfect love should cast out fear,
That we might share His heaven even here,
Amid our earthly griefs, could we but know.
Even as little children at their play,
For safety learn to keep in sight of home;
So, if our faltering footsteps never roam
Far from the lights of heaven—not in dismay
Shall we at last through Death's dread portals come,
But, led by Thee, who art the Light, the Way.

S. M. SPALDING.

On the Neglect of Secret Prayer.—A brother well known for his evangelistic work says that he had talked with fifty persons within a few months who felt that their Christian love had grown cold, and in every case they admitted that this had followed the neglect of secret prayer. With many, the next important step was the omission of family prayer. Certain causes inevitably lead to certain results, and this sliding backward was just what might be expected. The "means of grace" is an expression that seems to be going out of use, but the fact remains no less true now than in past years, that every Christian is in real danger as to his spiritual life whenever he neglects these means, such as the reading of God's Word, daily secret prayer, attendance upon the prayer meeting, and a devout observance of the Lord's day.

On Trying to do a Little More.—When we think we have done all that we possibly can do, it often is well to try to do a little more. We seldom find ourselves unable to do it. When we are at our wit's end in regard to some Sunday school scholar, for instance, whom nothing which we yet have been able to say or do has rendered attentive and orderly, so that we are in despair of doing him any good, then is just the time to redouble the earnestness of our prayers and efforts. Only when we are doing *all* in our power, have we the right to expect the divine co-operation and help. Even if no other blessing were, in God's providence, to follow, the experience and strength gained by the full and energetic use of our best powers for the benefit of another soul would be a rich reward, and, sooner or later, would be seen to be such. But God very often gives us also the reward for which we are aiming directly.

On Undemonstrative People.—It is a mistake to undervalue people because they are not specially demonstrative. The bustlers often would be amazed if they suddenly were to become aware of the extent to which they, with all their feeling of importance and responsibility, really are executing the plans of quiet souls who value power more than the name of possessing it, and upon whom they look down with a half-contemptuous feeling, but whose unconscious agents they are. "Still waters run deep," and the most unpretending people often are the longest headed. The same principle holds in spiritual things. Before the unobtrusiveness of some Christians is condemned, as if it were a lethargic indifference, there is wisdom in examining it closely. It often will be found not only more rich in genuine holiness, but also more fruitful of modest and retiring yet constant and effective activities, than the more ostentatious devotions of many who suppose themselves, and often are considered by others, the very pillars of the church.

On People Without a Temper.—Some people think it virtuous to say they have no temper. They scarcely realise, in their love for sweetness and amiability, that the glory of man is royal warm-heartedness, not the passivity of the fish. Sweet amiability, which is too weak for temper, will prefer peace to righteousness, and out of such indifference any wrong may come to be permitted. To be without proper temper is to be a moral shuttlecock, making life a game, in which the motto is "Hush!" and the enjoyment anyhow the pursuit. Courage and manhood cannot live in such a nature. False peace is bought to-day, to be heavily mortgaged to-morrow, with moral bankruptcy as the sequel. In many a home, if the first neglect or wrong had been kindly and wisely dealt with, and not passed over for peace sake, a career of ruin might have been stopped, and hours weary with sorrow been bright with love. When a great and generous heart sees weakness injured, and expresses wholesome anger, it makes you feel safer to know there are such men. No feature of Christ's character is more beautiful or solemn than His power of righteous indignation. Christ lives with men in life's battle, while Buddha only dreams. Christ is the Master of life, and is never mastered by it. Temper controlled—not either wearing the dress of a false patience or resignation, much less killed—is the Christian ideal.

EXAMINATION OF THE YOUNG IN RELIGIOUS KNOWLEDGE.

THE attention of pastors, conductors of Bible-classes, and superintendents and teachers of Sunday-schools is earnestly called to the Congregational Union Examinations, which will take place on the 6th, 7th, and 8th days of April next.

A circular, giving all details as to subjects, text-books, &c., was issued to pastors and others in the month of July, and the committee of the Union now respectfully urges all who are engaged in the religious training of the young in connection with Congregational churches to take steps for preparing their pupils for the examinations of next year.

As the examinations will be useful in the proportion in which they are actively countenanced by the Churches, it will be a satisfaction to the Committee if the pastors and teachers will do what they can to encourage the young people of their congregations or classes to offer themselves for examination. The Committee further urges that classes be formed with a view to the examinations.

Parcels of the July circular for free distribution may be obtained on application to Mr. C. Stancliff, Memorial Hall, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.

THE PENTLEY REVOLUTION:

A Story of Village Disaffection Sixty Years Ago.

IN the southern part of Derbyshire stands a picturesque village famous for its orchards and pastures, and presenting a scene of pastoral simplicity and beauty. But strangely enough, though far removed from the fermenting life of great towns, it was once the scene of a revolutionary rising, whose tragic end lifted it from the insignificance to which its proportions would have condemned it. Just before the first Reform Bill was passed, and while the Corn Laws were still cursing English agricultural life, there were volcanic throes and heavings in many parts of England. The pathetic patience of the farm labourers and the heroic self-restraint of our manufacturing population, alone saved us from an outbreak of popular frenzy. The disaffection expressed itself only in sporadic and disconnected strugglings against the fetters of evil laws and class privileges, and when a reformed Parliament freed the people's bread from taxation, discontent passed quietly away. It still remains a wonder how a quiet village became the centre of a seditious movement, but so it was, and, as usual in such cases, some of the most guilty escaped unpunished, and on the perfectly innocent women and children the heaviest woes rested.

At one end of this sweet village, which we will call Pentley, there stood, sixty years ago, a public house with the sign of the White Horse. It overlooked a romantic vale at the bottom of which runs the little river Amber, on its way to join the Derwent at Ambergate. One Monday night in the month of June, in the year 1826, a number of men gathered in the inn-parlour, with its sanded floor, its round deal tables scrubbed to almost snowy whiteness, and its walls adorned with portraits of fat oxen and celebrated brood mares, and with the portrait of the Duke of Devonshire, the Lord of the Manor. The occupants of the room were conversing in low tones. Two of them seemed to be leaders, and of these one had a paper on which he was writing names as they were mentioned to him.

"Now, then," said he, "is there anybody else in the village who has got a gun? Jem Purdy, how about your master?"

"Nay," said Jem, thus appealed to, "nay, Maister Johnson, I'll ha'e nowt to do wi' tellin' o' my owd maister. Ax somebody else if you want to know."

Mr. Johnson here turned sharply on him and said, "Young fellow, just mind what you're about. I thought you'd taken an oath to help this affair in every way possible. Bear in mind we've a pretty tight hold on you. Eh, gentlemen?"

The men chimed in with a murmur of assent, and an elderly man wearing a smock frock said to Jem,

"My lad, thou'd better not mek no bother. It'll be none the

wuss for thy owd maister. We shall only mek him gi'e us his gun, if he's got one."

"Well," said Jem sullenly, "I don't want to go back on my oath, I'm sure. I believe maister do keep a gun upstairs, but I never seed it."

"That'll do," said Johnson; "I'll put his name down."

The list of persons in the neighbourhood who kept firearms was gradually filled up, and during the time several other persons entered the room. They were a motley company: most of them were tillers of the soil, but perhaps a third were framework knitters from the adjacent village of Swanwick, and there were a few from the colliery and iron furnaces at Butterley. All were evidently poor men, and some so faded and bowed that one wondered they had spirit for anything, not to speak of an armed rising against the existing social order. There were about fifty persons in the room, though as some came and went, the company might have numbered from seventy to a hundred during the evening. About ten o'clock, the man called Johnson said,

"Well, I think there's no more to be done to-night. Now, my lads, I'm going to give you one last word. You must be as secret as the grave. You won't see me again till I meet you at Nottingham. I'm going there to-night, and I know I shall find ten thousand brave fellows waiting for the signal to rise. So you must meet to-morrow night for you know what, and as soon as it is light you must march along the Nottingham road, through Codnor and Langley, and, whatever you do, stick together and obey the word of command. You've chosen your own captain, and I shall leave everything with him. Now lads, no funking. It'll be fifty pounds at least to begin with, and every man's pot full, and the pick of all the gentlemen's houses, and then we shall be masters instead of servants."

"Ay! ay!" said one man, "that's the sort. Down wi' lord's and kings, I say, as winna let a poor man call his soul his own, nor own a bit o' land, wirout it is six foot at the last."

"Well done, my friend," cried Johnson; "now stick to that gentlemen, and you're safe; and who knows but one of you may be Duke of Devonshire next week instead of his young lordship on the wall there. But I must bid you good night, for it's a good step to Nottingham, and my horse is none of the best."

Amid a chorus of "good nights," and of promises to meet him soon at Nottingham, he left, and was soon driving away at a good pace. As he sat in his gig he began to laugh quietly, and soon a dark sneer crept over his face while he said to himself, "Well, of all the silly mutton-heads that ever were, I think they are the worst. And there's that Campion, a perfect ass. I daresay he thinks he'll be the Duke, if not the King. But they've got their necks well in the noose, and I think the job will stand me in a good three hundred at least. For my part, the more risings the better. They all bring butter to my bread." And with that he gave another laugh, this time a little louder, for he was now out of all hearing.

After his departure the men in the inn clustered round the man Campion, whom they had appointed as their leader, and in low tones made their final arrangements for the next night. Their plan was to visit at midnight every house where arms of any kind were kept, and to seize them. All who could were to bring horses, however come by, and scythes and bill hooks. They were then to march as best they could the twenty miles between Pentley and Nottingham, where they expected, according to Johnson's representations, to take part in a general plundering, and a universal changing of places between them and the aristocracy. About eleven o'clock the men dispersed to their homes, exchanging signals and communications with such stragglers as they passed. Jem Purdy, the young man who had demurred to give information about his master's gun, lived with his widowed mother in a thatched cottage, and just before reaching home a soft voice accosted him, saying, "Jem, is that you? Why, wherever have you been? I've waited here above an hour. I hope you haven't been with that Johnson and his lot. I wish you wouldn't, Jem, for he's a man as I can't abide."

"Now Mary," said Jem, for it was his sweetheart who had met him, "don't thee trouble thy head about me. You'll hear o' summat afore long, and theer'll be a difference i' this place. Theer's them as 'owds their 'eads 'igh as'll ha'e to sing small, and us poor chaps 'll ha'e a chance. Never thee fear, Mary; thou shalt be married in a silk gown, and ha'e a carpet on thy floor."

"Oh! Jem," she replied, "I cannot abear to hear thee talk like that. I'm afeared on thee running into danger. That Johnson's after no good, and he'll do thee no good. I feel quite frightened for thee, Jem. Now promise me one thing, as thou'll let no harm come to your old master. He's been a good friend to you, and he'll be a better if you'll let him."

"To be sure," said Jem. "I ain't agoing to do him no harm as I knows on, and nobody else I expect. Only he'll ha'e to tak his chance wi' the rest."

And so they parted, Jem with a blundering impression of being near some great improvement in the conditions of his life, and Mary with a trembling dread of the morrow; for although she knew vaguely what was coming, as men feel an electric atmosphere before the clouds gather and the lightning gleams, she knew nothing definite as to time and plans, nor could she, by any coaxing, induce Jem to tell her. Nor was she the only woman who dreaded the consequence of so many dark-browed conferences, and mysterious comings and goings of strangers, and the alienation of family confidence, and the brooding sullenness that had crept into the quiet life of Pentley. The next day passed as usual. The labourers were seen in fold and field; the children in the dame school conned their alphabet; the women in the cottages went through their round of household duties; and the orchards held their fulness towards the ripening heat of the sun. But no sooner had nightfall come than a change pulsated through the village, and

excited groups of men and youths began to move to a common centre, where they were harangued by their leader, Campion, and formed into some kind of order. Campion was a man of unusual height, with wild restless eyes, and long unkempt black hair and beard. His only qualifications for leadership were his physical power, a strong and overbearing voice, and a temper of audacious and reckless bravado. He had come to Pentley as a stranger only a few months before, and it had oozed out that he had until then been in receipt of parish relief, and that even now his family was being cared for by the authorities. But ill-judged enterprises may well be served by incapable agents. And so Campion formed his men for marching. They first went to those persons reported to possess firearms, and demanded them with excited shouts. They were in no case refused, and soon twenty or thirty were equipped with guns and pistols. Jem Purdy's master, Thomas Bowmer, lived a mile or more from the village, and his house was not reached till midnight. It was found in darkness, and all the inmates were in bed, but, in answer to shouts and knocking, the upper windows were thrown open, and old Mr. Bowmer called out to know what they wanted.

"We want your gun," said Campion, "and all the powder you've got."

"Indeed," was the reply, "and I should like to know what you want 'em for."

"Never you mind that," shouted Campion; "all you've got to do is to come down and gi'e it uz."

"I shall do nothing of the sort," said the stout old man. You're up to no good, and you'll get your necks in danger if you ain't careful."

While he was speaking, two strong men had wrenched open the shutters of the lower windows, and dashed in the framework. The farmer shouted, "Get out o' that, you vagabonds. I've got my gun here, and the next as breaks my windows I'll give him pepper."

The next instant there was a flash, a report, a wild scream, and the old man fell heavily forward on the window sill. The crowd gave a yell, for the first shot and the first blood had roused the tiger in them, and they burst frantically into the house and ransacked it. They had been neighbours of old Bowmer for years, but not even his pulseless body prevented their mad search. Presently Campion called them off, saying they had got all they wanted, and the house was left with its shadow of death, and its terrified inmates too shocked and stricken for tears. In the crowd, Jem Purdy, rigid with horror, had seen his master's death; and when the rest began to hurry away, he could not move. A gun had been entrusted to him, and he stood clutching it, with chattering teeth, and with strong vibrations of fear passing through his frame. When Campion came to him and shook him, telling him to fall into line, he turned away with a staggering run, and went on and on, with no purpose save to escape from the scene.

"Come, lads," cried Campion, "we can't awhile to go after him. It'll soon be time we was at Nottingham."

So on they marched, turning back and marching again through Pentley. As the morning advanced they saw many persons, but none interfered with them, and they hurried along shouting and brandishing their arms, and sometimes, on meeting some one well known to them, compelling him to join their ranks. They halted at every village on their route and loudly invited all to join their "Revolution," and here and there one or two were induced. But soon after passing through Langley, about half-way to Nottingham, there was seen in the distance the glitter of a troop of cavalry hastening to meet them. A cry was raised, "The soldiers are coming!" and instantly most of the misguided men turned and fled. The rest awaited boldly the approach of the troop, and more than one shot was fired. But the commander, who was accompanied by a magistrate, directed his men to secure prisoners, and not to fire. This was accordingly done, and about forty of them were disarmed and bound, and taken to Nottingham. The great rising these poor men had been led to expect had never taken place, and the way in which information of their movements had reached the Nottingham magistrates was easily explained. Riding beside the commanding officer was the glib villain, Johnson. He was a spy in the pay of the Government, and had long fattened on sedition. The sight of him, smiling, with their captors, maddened his poor victims, and they gnashed their teeth and cursed him. He nodded condescendingly to Campion and a few others, and then took no more notice of them. Though at the subsequent trial it was proved that he had actively encouraged the movement, and knew all its secrets, yet the Government neither prosecuted him, nor called him as a witness.

Later in the day, another troop of cavalry, accompanied by half-a-dozen mounted policemen, entered Pentley. They had come to search for others not yet captured, whose names Johnson had supplied. They found a few poor wretches who had brought back the miserable tidings of failure. Jem Purdy had been wandering about all day, and had not long arrived at home, pale and still trembling, when the soldiers came up and surrounded his mother's house. The door was kicked unceremoniously open, and the police entered. Seeing him, the sergeant asked,

"Are you James Purdy?"

"Yes, I am," he replied.

"Then you must come with me. I've got a warrant for your arrest on a charge of high treason."

His mother cried out, "Oh! master, my lad's been hereabout all day, and he never went off with 'em, I'm sure. There's nobody can say aught against him. Oh! don't tek my son."

"Well," said the policeman, "if your son's innocent, my good woman, so much the better for him. But I've got his name here, and go he must. Why, what's this, missis? Whose gun is this in the corner? Is it yours, young man?"

Jem stammered out that a man had lent him the gun that morning.

"And who might be he that lent it you?" said the officer; and when Jem said, "Campion," the officer laughed, and said, "I thought so."

Just then the door opened, and Mary Parkin, Jem's sweetheart, came in and stood wringing her hands and moaning, and when she saw Jem being handcuffed, she gave one wild shriek, and fell swooning to the floor. The police at once hurried off Jem, allowing him only scant farewells to his mother, who saw him depart with a heart ready to burst. Happily for her, Mary Parkin called for some attention, and in striving to revive her the widow found some relief from her own heart's awful throbbing. Mrs. Purdy was a Methodist, and accustomed to express her feelings in prayer, and her first act when Mary was better was to kneel down and cry mightily to God, and many a pathetic pleading, and many a vehement entreaty, broke from her lips. The gracious balm of prayer touched her soul at last, and she was able to move and speak more calmly.

There had been little sleep the previous night in Pentley, and that night few could rest in peace. It was as if a volcanic upheaval had suddenly despoiled some fair hillside covered with grass and flocks. Their quiet life had been riven to its centre, and the world could never be the same again. I hasten briefly to relate what followed. The poor men were put upon their trial for high treason, they having been found in arms against the King's authority, and for being active and accessory in the death of Thomas Bowmer. It was never discovered who fired that fatal shot. Ten of them were condemned to death, and were executed in front of Nottingham gaol. Some were sentenced to imprisonment for various terms; and against the remainder, with the concurrence of the judge, no evidence was offered, and they were discharged. Amongst those who suffered death was James Purdy, and the last time his broken-hearted mother and sweetheart saw him was on the day previous to his execution. There are many persons living who remember the "Pentley Revolution," and a few grey-haired actors in it yet survive. Mrs. Purdy is long since at rest, but Mary Parkin, a placid, white-haired woman, is a dear friend of mine. She has never married, and she may be seen Sunday after Sunday at the little Nonconformist chapel standing at one end of the village. A stranger, seeing her quiet face and hearing her kindly tones, would not imagine that her life had once been so darkened and desolated. But her cheerful gravity is a fruit of the Spirit, for in their dire and tragic sorrow, she and Mrs. Purdy poured out their hearts together before the Lord, and found at length, as they cried out of the depths, that God hides His stricken ones under the shadow of His wings, and that He who passed through Gethsemane and Calvary, never withholds from the travailing soul the sympathy of His eternal love.

A. SHORTMAN.

THE FALL OF THE LEAF.

THE FALL OF THE LEAF.

IT is a glorious autumnal evening; the sun which has been behind dull clouds all day, now for a few moments shows himself, and touches the tops of the oaks with a rich golden tinge, forming a striking contrast with the sombre colour of the new-ploughed meadow and brown feathery bracken. Over the low-lying fields a mist is slowly rising, enveloping the hedgerows in its damp and chilly embrace; a few tall poplars alone indicate the presence of the land below.

Pausing for a moment beneath the trees in our stroll through the woods, to contemplate the landscape, we notice a single leaf fall to the ground. Never before did we so fully appreciate the beautiful lines of our Poet Laureate :—

> "Lo! in the middle of the wood,
> The folded leaf is woo'd from out the bud
> With winds upon the branch, and there
> Grows green and broad, and takes no care,
> Sun-steep'd at noon, and in the moon
> Nightly dew-fed; and turning yellow
> Falls, and floats adown the air."

That small leaf is now to us the emblem of a human life. The child, reared in the midst of plenty, and growing into useful manhood, sees around him the good results of his labours, then slowly takes his course down the vale of life, till having completed his full measure of usefulness, he falls once more to Mother Earth, making room for other and younger workers.

But what will befall our oak leaf? Becoming loosened from the twig, it has slowly floated down to its companions, and forms with them a brown rustling carpet on the grass. Let us try and trace its future history. For that purpose we will turn up a little of the earth beneath the grass at our feet. This we find to consist almost entirely of vegetable matter, bits of twig and portions of decayed oak leaves. This then is one of the ways in which some of the many thousands of fallen leaves that are annually scattered over our woodlands are disposed of, forming new earth for other oaks to grow in at some future date. Thus nothing is lost in nature; the smallest flower though it may "blush unseen" and wither away one season, may arise the next in a still more beautiful form, and help to adorn one of our country lanes with its pure bright petals and sweet perfume.

But there is another way in which the leaves disappear from the earth. Yonder stream, flowing so gently downwards, after a storm is swollen and muddy; dead branches, twigs, and leaves are swept on and on until they reach the sea, where they slowly sink, and are buried beneath the ever-increasing sediment. Precisely in this way were some of those thick beds of shale formed which are found above and beneath the coal; on breaking open a piece as it comes

from the mine, bits of pre-historic ferns, trees, and other types of vegetation now extinct, may sometimes be descried; but the lapse of ages and the enormous weight of rock above have changed their probable green colour to the glistening black of the coal. Perhaps in some future age of this planet's history, other races of men may find traces of British oak leaves in the ground, in the same way; for it is just as likely that the present sea may become dry land, as it was in ages past, that the land of those days would become sea; and that this did take place is fully proved by the presence of sandstone containing sea-shells, &c., above the coal beds.

But the sun has set; a faint glow of light in the west yet remains, and all the rest is gloom. Everything is silent save the breeze slightly stirring the bare branches, and the distant murmur of the brook. We slowly turn our steps homeward, for the bright blaze of the fire and the merry laughter of the family circle are more congenial company than the cold night air. Not, however, do we go without a thought of the Omnipotent Creator, whose glory and power are alike shown, in the starry vault of heaven, and the tenderest bud that opens in the spring.

Ewloe Wood. W. ALLETSON.

JAMES HERBERT'S DIARY;

Or, Experiences with Seekers after God.

By the Rev. ROBERT TUCK, B.A., Author of "Netley Independent Chapel," "Links Wanted," &c.

VII.—STOPPING HALFWAY.

HERBERT used to say that he could think best with the pen in his hand, and when any cases of special anxiety occurred in his pastoral work, he made his diary contain all his serious thoughts about them. Every earnest minister, who "watches for souls," is painfully distressed by the number of cases of *half success* he meets with. So many of those who are aroused to religious anxiety find a sufficiently satisfactory shelter-place in the "Halfway house of Morality." They are indeed, lifted to a higher plane, but they never reach to the highest, and the comfortableness they feel, on that lower plane of morality, even prevents them from desiring to step up higher; and ministerial appeals fail to pierce the outer casing of their moral self-satisfaction. It may even be feared that ministers grow content to let these "only almost saved ones" go, pacifying their own consciences by saying, "We have quite as good people *out* of the church as *in* it."

If Christ himself were to preach His searching things in our congregations, there are many who would answer Him, as did the young rich ruler, "All these things have I kept from my youth; what

lack I yet?" Sometimes we have thought it was a lost art, certainly it is a strangely neglected art, driving men out of the "Halfway house of Morality;" withering the Jonah-gourds that grow up over men, and letting the blazing sun of the Divine claims strike hard upon unsheltered heads. So few of us now-a-days repeat after the great Apostle, and say, "Knowing, therefore, the *terror* of the Lord, we persuade men."

Herbert came home one night, from visiting a sick member of his congregation, in an unusually anxious state of mind. His wife drew from him that the man he had been visiting was in a most perilous condition; that it was a battle between life and death; and that, in face of eternity, long trusted morality had fallen about him like a house of cards, and it was a question whether *now* he would accept the offered gift of pardon and life in Christ Jesus.

Wanting to find expression for burdening thoughts, Herbert went into his study, and wrote the following in his diary:—

"Henry Staines was one of the members of my first Bible-class, when I began my ministry here, over thirty years ago. I remember him well as he was then, a dark haired, clear eyed, intelligent youth, on whom I set high hopes. My class was a mixed one, and another of its members was Lucy Giles, the second daughter of one of my deacons; one of those bright chatty pleasant girls, who seem sent to cheer social life and intercourse. With a young man's early fervour I strove to awaken personal concern about salvation in every member of the class; and God graciously permitted a wave of earnest feeling to pass over us, which carried several of of our number into the rest and joy of believing.

"Henry Staines was amongst the seekers, and I had several private conversations with him, which gave me good hope that he would soon be a Christian indeed, by full decision for Christ, and acceptance of the gift of eternal life in Him. But time passed on, and the decision I watched for did not come, and presently it became apparent that he had 'stopped halfway,' and satisfied himself that in his own strength he could, and by his own will he would, seek after the things that are honest and amiable and good.

"I found that he and Lucy Giles had become engaged, and that this new interest in life had greatly helped him to feel easy, if not restful, in the 'Halfway house of Morality.' After a while they married, and during my ministry their family has been growing up around them. At first they kept up their relations with Christian services, but they had no inspiration to engage in Christian work coming out of the 'constraining love.' They soon found out that morality permits a self-indulgent Sunday, and allows its worshippers to fill their everyday lives with worldly and self-seeking interests; and, if old associations helped *them* to keep worldliness within reasonable limits, their children knew no such restraints, and easily made moral liberty mean moral licence. Poor Staines had a bitter experience in that 'Halfway house of Morality,' but it did not strike him that his family evils naturally resulted from his being only 'almost,' and not 'altogether,' a Christian; and so, failing to

get his own life, or his family life, ruled by the true Christian motives.

"He had in fact been caught up by the spirit of the age, and whirled away into a butterfly life of social gaieties, and intellectual shallownesses. He and his wife came to chapel once on the Sunday, and occasionally one or two of the young people would come with them; but tennis was played all the Sunday afternoon during the summer, and novels and newspapers were the staple Sunday reading. While the parents retained a kind of helpless orthodoxy of religious sentiment, the young people took up with the small scepticism, which is now the common excuse for lives of self-indulgence, and the lack of desire for the knowledge of the true God and the eternal life.

"I wish I could write that the case of Staines' family was an isolated one. I fear it is only too common, and I fear even more that, as ministers, we are accepting what we call 'the inevitable,' and are even permitting ourselves to imagine that this self-indulgent morality, this 'stopping halfway,' will suffice in the sight of God. Nay, if I wrote what has been the gravest fear of my heart, I should be compelled to say that the ministers seem, too often, themselves to drop down from their higher plane of personal piety on to this lower level of self-indulgent morality.

"But the 'Halfway house' will only shelter while the summer sunshine lasts. It is at best but a 'lodge in a garden of cucumbers,' never intended for winter storms, and utterly useless when the winds of trouble rise high, and the rains of sickness and of death drive hard and long upon the frail building. So Staines has found it. I have just come from his bedside. His prolonged illness has seriously affected his business. He has made little or no provision for his family. They who serve morality generally live up to their means, and exaggerate the interests and claims of the 'living present.' And now, for some days, he has been lying on the border-land, and, in the light of the eternal world, he has been reviewing his life, and seeing his error. To-night he said to me, 'I see where I was wrong. I rested in being *near* the Kingdom, I ought to have "entered in." I thought I could be a good man without a divine renewal; and so there has been no vitality in the moral excellence and propriety for which I have always striven. I see now that I have tried to be good for my own sake and in my own strength, and only a very poor and commonplace goodness have I been able to attain. If I had known that "life in Christ," for which you so constantly plead, I can see now that really good fruitage would have found expression for Divine life.'

"Staines seems to have gone in thought right across the intervening years, and to be living over again the serious thoughts and seekings of the old Bible-class days. If God spares his life he cannot undo the evil influence exerted on his family by his unspiritual example, but he himself may be saved, 'yet so as by fire.'

"Thinking over his case, I am led to say, Am I, as a minister, are my brethren, as ministers and teachers, rightly apprehending

the modern evil of stopping in the 'Halfway house of Morality'? It is a crowded place in these days. It is astonishing how many of the children of pious parents succeed in getting more or less comfortable lodgings there. We ought to be doing somewhat as Jonah did to wicked Nineveh. We should be going to and fro in this place of concourse, and crying, 'Ye must be *born again!*'

"So many of our seekers set out earnestly for the 'wicket-gate,' even as Bunyan's Pilgrim did. The burden of sin is upon them, and they fain would 'flee from the wrath to come,' but soon they meet with some Mr. Worldly Wiseman, who, with supreme confidence, recommends a residence for life in the town of Morality, where there is such *good society*. 'Why, in yonder village (it is named Morality), there dwells a gentleman whose name is Legality, a very judicious man, and a man of very good name, that has skill to help men off with such burdens as thine is from their shoulders, yea, to my knowledge, he hath done a great deal of good this way; ay, and besides, he hath skill to cure those that are somewhat crazed in their wits with their burdens. There, I say, thou mayest be eased of thy burden, and if thou art not minded to go back to thy former habitation (as indeed I would not wish thee), thou mayest send for thy wife and children to thee in this village, where there are houses now standing empty, one of which thou mayest have at a reasonable rate: provision is there also cheap and good, and that which will make thy life more happy is, to be sure there thou shalt live by honest neighbours, in credit and good fashion.'

"Clever John Bunyan! How skilfully he shows the temptation offered still to seekers to stop halfway, and come short of 'eternal life.' And his picture of the arrest of his pilgrim, under the frowning hill, is still suggestive of the way in which we should deal with hindered seekers. Alas! the modern ministry has lost *Sinai* out of its themes. There are no signs of the darkness, the thunderings, or the great voice, which will not let souls pass on to Worldly Wiseman's village. I have been sinfully content to leave Staines in his 'Halfway house' all these years; and if he had perished in his self-centred goodness, I could not have been free, before God, from the guilt of his blood. And are there others who are also satisfied with morality; upright, amiable, orderly, good citizens, excellent neighoburs, fairly efficient parents, whose very goodness is keeping them from the 'eternal life'?—then I must find out how, in God's wisdom and grace, I may awaken them to a sense of needing 'forgiveness,' and 'regeneration.' That Holy Spirit which is in the Church is still the convincer of *sin*, of *righteousness*, and of *judgment*, and my ministry must be a fitting agency for His use.

"This 'stopping halfway' has become, in our time, a more formidable evil than it ever has been, through the modern worship of *Humanity*. But if we are to be found faithful, above all the modern noise, the Master's demand must be heard from our lips:—'Nothing else will do. *Ye must be born again.*'"

CHURCH-AID AND HOME MISSIONARY WORK.

DIFFICULTIES OF VILLAGE EVANGELISATION.

"WHAT love men must have for souls who will come to Steart every Sunday!" said my reverend companion to me, as we held on to the sides of the waggonette when returning from the anniversary of the chapel in that retired spot. The last two miles of the road are rough enough to supply an illustration of the difficulties of travelling to a better locality. Steart is a shrimping station on the Bristol Channel. The village consists of twenty-five cottages, and is famous not only for its shrimps, but for its invigorating breezes, its miles of mud, and its fine sea at certain tides. For thirty or forty years Steart has more or less enjoyed the blessing of a little Congregational mission chapel, seating seventy persons, which by the energy, spiritual and manual, of the district evangelist, Mr. Jabez Carey, has just been very prettily renovated.

During nearly forty years, or for a century perhaps (for the cottages look as old as that), the "national" church seems to have shown no anxiety to bring the Gospel to the doors of the people; but when Mr. Carey's zeal revived the cause, the rector of the parish became solicitous for their spiritual welfare, and has recently built a handsome mission chapel, large enough to accommodate all possible worshippers at Steart. Let those who imagine that the multiplication of small chapels in villages is an offence chiefly of any one of the Free Church bodies, remember that for one such fault that he can charge against Independents, Baptists, or Methodists, it is possible to find ten against the Established Church. In these western counties the case is the same as elsewhere; the clergy remain asleep unless the Free bodies are awake, but when chapels are filled, and much good is being done, the hearts of the privileged parsons are smitten with sore distress that the sheep in other folds are not eating episcopal food out of "regularly appointed" vessels. The cuckoo lays no eggs till it sees another nest complete, but finding one well-made and comfortable, it steps in slyly, lays its innocent-looking egg, hatches out its young by means of borrowed warmth, grows until it fills the nest, turns out the original occupants and their children, and the legitimate owners of the old home can only look with sorrowful amazement at the creature they have helped to rear, and then—leave the place to the self-satisfied robber!

My pen has run away with me. I have begun my story at the wrong end. I meant to have reserved the difficulties of the village pastor with the parsons to the last; but as I have broken my own thread, I will tie the knot and continue.

The gravest of all hindrances to the spread of evangelical religion in the villages of our county is the attitude of the clergy of the Established Church. They show little interest in anything

which can be called religious, unless it is in opposition to "Dissent." They seem to live, not to save sinners, but to catch saints. Almost their only gospel is the gospel of Christmas blankets and half-crowns. This is certainly preached most vigorously to keep people from chapel. High Church curates, raw boys who know more of athletics than of the Gospel, put themselves to considerable trouble to go round and discuss the iniquities of Dissent. In at least one place there is a notice on the church door reminding parishioners of the wickedness of worshipping elsewhere than in the parish church. From many of their pulpits are fulminated the ridiculous anathemas of the privileged tithe-eaters who declare to their flocks, "There is no religion at chapel," and "Conversion is all nonsense." A certain prebendary has lately distinguished himself much in this way, because of a very successful special mission in his neighbourhood, when the Spirit of God did great things. He has honoured us by declaring that the doctrine of Regeneration is a "Dissenting dogma." Godly men there are here and there among the clergy; but speaking generally, the gravest hindrance to true religion and to Christian neighbourliness is the parish priest. His one aim seems to be to keep the people from heresy and schism. He is a great deal more anxious to keep them from going to chapel than even to get them to go to church.

There we touch upon a subject that is not sufficiently considered by many persons who talk about Church and Dissent in the country districts. It cannot be said too plainly that the contest between the two is not wholly a religious one. It is not even chiefly a religious one. It is chiefly political. A vast number of Church parsons would not care a brass farthing whether the agricultural labourers and poorer people in villages went to church or chapel—*if only they would vote straight for the Tories.* The squires care less about the religious aspect of the question than even the parsons. But when, as the result of the conditions of freedom of thought and method, and the awakening of intelligence consequent on the growth of spiritual life, the labourer votes Liberal, it is quite another thing. The Tories charge Nonconformist chapels, and especially those of Independents and Baptists, with being "Radical Committee rooms." Of course they are nothing of the sort, and very seldom, perhaps not at all, are politics referred to any way during service. Only when sometimes a week evening meeting is held at a Congregational chapel (because no other building is available), in the interests of freedom, enlightenment, and progress, are politics heard within its walls. But, to the honour of Independency be it said, it makes men Radicals, or in other words, it makes them men of unfettered thought and men whose opinions and actions are grounded upon those principles which belong to the "things which cannot be shaken," and which shall abide for ever.

Among the village pastor's difficulties is also the fact that he sometimes loses influence because he shrinks from grieving good men

associated with him in church fellowship and work who differ from him in politics. While nine-tenths of the members of our congregations in the villages are Liberals, there is often the one-tenth of Tories, chiefly farmers. Most of the farmers have drifted off to the Establishment or to Wesleyanism, because of the attraction of Toryism. In that case their removal has lessened one difficulty, but it has increased another. It has left the Congregational Chapel the weaker as regards mere funds, and the village pastor consequently labours only among the poor. But if the farmers remain and are of the Tory persuasion, the self-enforced silence of the minister on public questions bedims his church as a centre of light, and weakens it as the social reforming agency which every church of every denomination ought to be.

The poverty of the village congregation just referred to must not be omitted from the list of our difficulties, although it is so trite a topic. Money is an immense power, and consecrated wealth is as enviable a gift as consecrated health, or speech, or intellect. Our village churches possess this consecrated gift in only a very small measure. While not forgetting that faith and zeal with wealth can do more than abundance of it possessed by indifference and unbelief, an extra ten to thirty pounds a year at many of our chapels would solve an immense number of difficult questions. The great and superfluous wealth of the Establishment is pitted against the poverty of Nonconformity in country places. Some of our people pay more in the way of tithes to keep the reverend representative of privilege in plenty than they can afford afterwards to give to their own minister to save him from lacking bread. The contrast between episcopal Dives and congregational Lazarus is seen in almost every neighbourhood. For instance, the restoration of half-empty churches is carried on by means of public and private funds at a rate which appears sometimes wasteful and extravagant, while many well-filled chapels fall into decay. In a little parish of 254 persons the church has just been restored at an expense of £1,000. In another wretched and demoralised place where, among a population of 356 persons, there is said to be only one professedly religious person, the chancel was recently restored at an expenditure of £2,700, and the bishop, in his sermon at the re-opening, congratulated the neighbourhood on its piety!

But, notwithstanding all the wealth and prestige of the Establishment, its possession of the schools, and endowments, and emoluments of many kinds, it is surprising to see how slight a hold it has on the religious feelings of the people, and how almost entirely it has failed as an evangelising agency. In many places "the Church" is the centre of darkness rather than of light. This is sometimes owned by the clergy themselves, though not in the same terms as we make the charge. At S—— the vicar recently made a statement to his patron, a local territorial magnate, that of a population of 1,100 only forty are in attendance at the parish church. Our Congregational lay-pastor, who is labouring there zealously, had this summer a curious proof of the pious baronet's zeal against

heresy and schism. There is a vacant space in the centre of the village, over which the said baronet has rights. It is commonly let rent-free to wild beast shows, circuses, fairs, and revels. Our friend sought permission to put a tent of the Evangelization Society there for a fortnight of special services. The space is so large that no one could have been interfered with or inconvenienced. But he had to learn by experience that the conservators of State-made piety could lend a site to wild beasts, to clowns, and patrons of publicans, but that a tent for the free and unsectarian preaching of the Gospel must be pitched in a field not nearer than a mile from the village.

The Establishment has secularised the public mind. It has set class against class. Almost every form of social disagreement and disability is due to the attitude of the clergy. Practically there is no association in the villages between Church and Dissent. If an anniversary is announced at chapel the clergyman arranges some attraction in church or schoolroom for the same evening, and I have even known the ringing of the church bells to be practised on an unusual day, at the very hour when speeches were being made at chapel, and meetings have been virtually broken up in that way.

In this connection a word ought to be said in regard to the Romanising wave that is just now rolling over the land. But that is a big enough subject for a special article. It must suffice to say that wherever an evangelical is missed a high churchman takes his place. These men are gentlemanly in their bearing, and not the fox-hunting parsons of former days. While I was writing these words a lay-pastor of long experience called on me and I told him what I was doing. I said, "Tell me, please, what you should call the greatest hindrance to religion in the village." Without a moment's hesitation, he said, "The Church." But, proceeding, he added, "The clergy of these days are not like those of my younger days. I mind one day when I was on my knees praying with a dying woman. The parson came in, took me by the collar of my coat, dragged me up, and told me to get out. They don't do so now; they are downright Jesuits. They are all smiles and welcomes, but they work against us far more than they used to do in the old times." Let our younger men take note of warning. We Independents have more work to do in country villages in the future than even in the past. Let us be buckling on the armour of truth and knowledge for the coming struggle.

Still another difficulty of the village pastor is the constant drain on his school and congregation from migration to large towns and to the colonies. One of our lay pastors, Mr. W. P. Harding, of Pitney, near Langport, a man who has resided for forty-five years where he now labours in universal esteem, told me that, of a thousand children who have passed through his Sunday-school, not ten are now residing in the village. We are told that "when Saul saw any strong man, or any valiant man, he took him unto himself." The great cities stretch out their giant arms in all directions across these agricultural counties. They seize the best of our

young men and women, and carry them off into the great vortex where they disappear among the crowd. The young people who are the pastor's hope are also the pastor's anxiety, because he is constantly anticipating that they—his only "riches"—are about to "take to themselves wings and fly away."

I should be unfaithful to my convictions if I did not also express the opinion that one of the gravest facts our Congregational leaders and the Church-Aid Society must face is this, that the present type of the village pastor is not equal to that of bygone generations. I know that there are among us plenty of men whose Christian and manly virtues are beyond our poor laudation. My belief is that the worthy and good men considerably exceed the incapable, the unspiritual and the cantankerous. But, with all due apologies to my brethren for venturing on so presumptuous a statement, I cannot help thinking that our true policy in strengthening Independency lies in making it very difficult to get into our ministry. In nine cases out of ten the men who come from the questionable region of "Lord-knows-where" are scatterers of the flock, and by so doing prove that they are hirelings and not genuine shepherds. If Congregationalism is not to be blotted out of the villages, we must set ourselves against the admission of untrained men into our ministry, and we must help out of it, if we can, those who are manifestly unfit. Perhaps it is the migration of the people from the villages, and the centralising of thought and energy as well as population in the towns that keep able men from settling in the country districts, but certain it is that a generation or two ago there were ministerial giants in some of our village churches which are now the shadow of their former selves. There were great men in the small places—great in intellect, in theological learning, in social influence, in pulpit power. Chapels that are now almost extinguished were then burning and shining lights. Why cannot it be so again? A more hearty interest in the home missionary work of Congregationalism would tend to promote this. There would be fewer failures of village pastorates if among other things the denomination more heartily supported the funds of the Church-Aid Society. Let our churches have their Home Missionary meeting annually, or something equivalent to it, as they have their Foreign Missionary meeting. We want more heartiness and reality in our utterances as to the needs of village churches. People will give when their sympathies are touched. No amount of money will be wasted which will bring the facts home to the hearts and heads of those who form our congregations. The comparative failure of the Church-Aid Society is not to be accounted for on that ground, but on the fact that people do not really know, so as to have their sympathies aroused, what the Church-Aid Society is or what it is doing.

Bridgwater. EDWIN JOSHUA DUKES.

THE TEACHERS' PAGE.

INTERNATIONAL LESSONS FOR OCTOBER.

THE month's lessons are selected incidents from the later history of Israel and Judah. The preservation of Elisha from the secret assault of the Syrians (2 Kings vi. 8—23). The pressure of famine in Samaria, which was so providentially relieved (2 Kings vii. 1—17). The overdone energy of Jehu in executing the Divine judgment on the house of Ahab (2 Kings x. 15—31). And the efforts made to repair and restore Solomon's temple, after years of hard wear, and the defilement of prevailing idolatrous systems (2 Kings xii. 1—15).

It is very difficult to find any formal connection between these lessons. The only thread we can trace is the *energy* or *zeal* shown by all the persons who are introduced. The energy of the Syrian king in his effort to seize Elisha; of the lepers in going out to the Syrian camp; of Jehu in destroying Baalism; and of Joash in taking the matter of repairing the Temple out of the hands of the priests.

Each topic had better be taken separately, and we suggest a point which each lesson may be used to illustrate and enforce.

I. *God's Care of those who Serve Him.*—Elisha was in serious danger. The Syrians had come in the night to take him, and had so surrounded the place where he was residing that escape seemed to be quite impossible. But the fact was, and God let the servant see it, the hosts of Jehovah were so encircling the prophet that his enemies could not get near him.

The subject of the "ministry of angels" is thus brought before us. God cares for us, and uses angel-agencies for our preservation. It will be best to show how angels were associated with the life of the Lord Jesus. This angel-ministry is a form of the Divine care which can be made deeply interesting to children, and it should be used to correct the often mistaken notions produced by fascinating "fairy-tales."

In this lesson is found a perplexing difficulty. It is the way in which Elisha *deceived* the Syrians. On this two things may be said—(1) It was distinctly a time of war, and peril to life, when stratagems are universally recognised as permissible. (2) And even practical jokes may sometimes be permitted, if the object is to show utter contempt of a foe.

II. *God's Providence fulfilling God's Promise.*—God's providence is ever working, but when deliverances come, or doors are opened for us, we so readily say that all this has come about *by accident.* Therefore, we find in the Bible so many cases in which God *promises beforehand* the deliverance which presently His providence effects; and so we are taught always to trace God's hand in our deliverings and rescuings. So-called accidents are God's rulings and overrulings.

This subject should be illustrated by familiar and personal instances of God's providence.

III. — *The Sin of Self-Willed Obedience.*—Which does, indeed, God's work, but does it in a wrong spirit, and with self-seeking ends. Jehu evidently cared much more about his own prospects than about God's glory. Our obedience ought to be exact in form, but we must also take care that it is worthy in spirit.

Illustrate by showing how often children obey their mother, but do so in a bad temper; and such obedience cannot be acceptable.

IV. *By caring for God's House and Worship we may express our Love for God Himself.*—The great temple for us to care about is the temple of our life and conduct. About that we ought to be supremely anxious. And that will be found to need constant examinings and repairings, if it is to be a fitting temple for the Holy Ghost.

But while we are in the midst of *forms* we cannot be, we ought not to be, unmindful of the place where we and our fathers have worshipped God. Inculcate the duty of cherishing reverent thoughts concerning God's house; but guard against superstitious sentiments which tend to make more of the *material* than of the *spiritual.* "What house will ye build for Me, and where is the place of My rest? . . . To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at My word" (Isaiah lxvi. 1, 2).

ROBERT TUCK.

WEE JEEMSIE:

A Scottish Story, Founded on Fact.

WEE JEEMSIE was one of the little boys that ran about the railway station in Greenock, selling the *Evening Telegraph*. He had a peculiar way—quite his own—of crying "Eve-nan Telegraph, a ha'penny!" It was familiar to everybody near the station, and to all the regular passengers arriving by the afternoon trains. Many knew the cry who had never observed Wee Jeemsie himself.

He was not much to see. His companions called him "Wee Jeemsie" because he was so very small. He looked all the more minute from his tattered habiliments having all belonged to bigger people. His wee, pinched face was almost hidden under an old greasy cap, that might have been thrown away by a railway stoker. From the trousers he wore, the original legs had vanished; but what was left was enough to come down to Wee Jeemsie's knees, where they terminated in a ragged fringe, from under which appeared his spare limbs and little, hacked feet, bespattered with the mud of the dirty causeway. An old jacket—probably his father's once—hung loosely about him, like a ragged coat. Had you tried to button it, the button-hole would have gone round his shoulder to his back. But, probably, there was no button anywhere upon it. Here and there it was fastened with bits of string. When the weather was wet, Wee Jeemsie had plenty of room under his ragged jacket to keep the papers dry. And there he always was, running about the entrance to the station on the arrival of the afternoon trains, crying, with his peculiar cry: "Eve-nan Telegraph, a ha'penny!"

There was a little shop near the station, where Wee Jeemsie ran when he wanted change. The girl behind the counter—Betsey Barr by name—a young damsel, about head and shoulders taller than Wee Jeemsie, was very kind to him, as she saw that he was sometimes cruelly treated by the bigger boys. As Betsey went on Sundays to a mission school, that had been opened in the Vennel, she got Wee Jeemsie to go with her; but he was so restless and mischievous, and made the other boys laugh so much, that, after being warned again and again by the superintendent, he was at last dismissed as incorrigible, greatly to Betsey's distress. But, poor boy, he had no one to encourage or train him at home. His mother was dead, and his father was given to drink. Betsey, however, behind the counter of the little shop, was as kind to him as ever.

That was the time when the Greenock bus used to run—before the days of the tramway. The guard of the bus seemed to have a

general aversion to newsboys, and a special aversion to Wee Jeemsie. But, when the bus was waiting for the train, and the guard was not looking, Jeemsie would dart up, mount the back steps, and cry eagerly in: "Eve-nan Telegraph, a ha'penny!" He seemed to have one eye for business and another eye for the guard; for the monent the guard looked round, Wee Jeemsie was down and off like a shot, flinging up his heels, and crying as he looked back triumphantly: "Eve-nan Telegraph, a ha'penny!" Sometimes when the guard went into the neighbouring public-house, and there was no immediate danger, Jeemsie, when he failed to find any purchasers for his papers, used to sing. His favourite performance in this line was a song called "My Cuddie and me," the chorus of which involves the imitation of a donkey's bray, which Jeemsie achieved in so amusing a fashion that the people in the bus used to laugh and sometimes one or two threw out a ha'penny for him.

Jeemsie, however, began to be afflicted with a cough, caught through exposure. His father, when drinking, used to take poor Jeemsie's coppers from him to buy drink. Jeemsie, when he had failed to sell his papers, was afraid to face his father without any money, and would lie out in some close all night. This exposure brought on a severe cold and cough, which became so bad that he became unable to sing his favourite song—the imitation of the donkey provoking the cough and compelling him to stop. Still, however, he plied his trade with the evening papers, though his voice began to lose the cheeriness of its old tone when he cried: "Eve-nan Telegraph, a ha'penny!" There was an effort now, and something even of sadness in it.

About this time, his friend, Betsey Barr, was taken to Glasgow by her employer for several months. Betsey was more attached to the friendless little boy than she knew, till she was away from the daily sight of him and the daily sound of his familiar cry.

When she got back to Greenock, arriving in the afternoon, her first thought on reaching the station was about Wee Jeemsie. Descending the broad steps towards the street, she expected every moment to catch sight of him, or at least to hear his "Eve-nan Telegraph, a ha'penny!" She had a penny ready in her hand, intending, when she saw him, to buy a paper and give him the other halfpenny to himself, "for auld lang syne," as she said. But, though she heard the other boys shouting, she watched in vain for the familiar cry of Wee Jeemsie.

Turning up the street, with eye and ear on the alert, she at last accosted another boy, whom she had often seen racing with Jeemsie from the newspaper office with fresh editions of the paper, to see who would reach the station first. This boy, in answer to her inquiry, said he heard that Wee Jeemsie was ill; "lyin' wi' the cough," he said. Betsey was concerned at this news, and was about to put some further questions, when the boy, catching sight of a likely customer, darted away.

Betsey felt so anxious about the friendless boy that she went

straight to the place where he lived. Reaching the dark and miserable close, she saw his father sitting smoking in a back court; and, though his face was turned from her, she could see that he had been drinking. Ascending the narrow and dirty stair to the attic, she met Jeemsie's little sister at the top, crying bitterly, and apparently hesitating whether to go back or down.

"What ails you?" said Betsey, in a tone of sympathy. "What's wrang, Gracie? Is Wee Jeemsie here?"

"Ay; he's in there," sobbed the child, pointing; "but, oh! he's far through. Betsey, Betsey," she cried, "wha'll I dae? I'm feart to go doon to faither; he's awfu' cross; I'm feart to bide."

All the time she was speaking, Betsey heard a painful coughing in the garret behind. She took the child's hand, and went in.

There, in the wretched garret, lying on some straw, lay Wee Jeemsie, wasted away to a skeleton and evidently dying. His coughing had ceased, and he lay back, utterly exhausted, looking as if he were dead.

Betsey bent over him and said, "Jeemsie!" and again, "Jeemsie!"

He raised his head with difficulty, as if to listen, and then sank back again. Betsey knelt down beside him, and called him again and again by name. At length he opened his eyes, and looked vaguely toward her.

"Din ye no ken me, Jeemsie?" she said, bending close. "Din ye no mind Betsey Barr, at the station, when ye was sellin' the papers and cryin', 'Eve-nan Telegraph'?"

The dying boy recognised her now, and, looking up into her kindly face, smiled.

"Ay, Betsey!" he said, faintly. "Eve-nan Telegraph, a ha'penny. I'll never be there again, Betsey."

"Dinna say that, Jeemsie. Maybe ye'll get better."

He turned up his weary eyes, as though he said: "No, no, Betsey, I'll no' get better noo."

Betsey waited; but, as he did not attempt to speak, and was evidently very weak, she began softly to sing one of the hymns they used to sing in the Sunday-school. When she had finished, he said: "O, Betsey! That's nice, very nice." He looked at her silently for a time, and then said: "The wee book. Will ye read a bit oot o' the wee book, Betsey?"

Not knowing what he referred to, Betsey turned to the child.

"Ay," said the little girl, "the wee book ye gied him in the Sunday-school. He's rale fond o't."

The child had searched in the straw and brought out a little book of Scripture passages and stories that Betsey had used in the Sunday-school. It brought tears into her eyes to see it again, and to find that Wee Jeemsie had kept it so carefully.

She opened it and said: "What would you like me to read, Jeemsie?"

"Read," he said, "about the bonnie land, and the folks in the white claes."

She knew the portion he was thinking of, and, turning to it, began to read about the land where there is no sorrow, nor pain; and about the shining gates, and the streets of gold. When she looked at him, he was listening earnestly.

"Aa," said he; "that's nice, Betsey," he added, looking eagerly into her face; "will there be any *Telegraph* boys there?"

Not knowing what she ought to say, Betsey, with tears in her eyes, turned to the little book again, and read about the great multitude all in white robes and palms in their hands. And how the man said, "Who are these?" And the other answered, "These are they that came out of great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

When she paused, the dying boy said, "Isn't that Jesus, Betsey?"

"Ay, Jeemsie," she said. "And ye ken how kind He was, and how He took the weans in His arms, and never turned naebody awa'."

Suddenly a fit of coughing seized the dying boy, and when it passed, he sank back, utterly exhausted.

Betsey took his hand, and put her other arm tenderly round his neck to bear him up. "Oh, Jeemsie!" she said, "I'm feared ye're far thro'."

He looked at her, and she saw a change coming rapidly over him.

"Oh, Jeemsie!" she said, "pray to Jesus."

He tried to speak, but could only gasp, "I canna—I canna pray."

"Haud up your hand, then, Jeemsie!" she said. "Maybe He'll see you."

The dying boy lifted up his wee, thin hand, all trembling. Suddenly, as he looked over it, his face brightened with a strange and wondrous light. "Oh!" he cried, joyfully, "I see Him! I see Him!"

His hand fell, the light faded from his face, his head sank back, and Wee Jeemsie had passed away.

Newport, Fife. DAVID MACRAE.

PSALM LVI. 3.

"What time I am afraid, I will trust in Thee.

UP to Thy Throne, our Father God,
Let this and all our prayers ascend;
Bow down Thy list'ning ear in love,
And to our heartfelt wish attend.

And have we now a special need
To seek Thy wise and gentle aid?
To hold Thy hand with firmer grasp,
And hear Thy voice, "Be not afraid"?

Yea, keep us, Lord, quite close to Thee,
A threefold cord 'twixt heav'n and earth,
An antepast of holier things
Of which we cannot know the worth.

Through whatsoever times we pass,
Let no ungracious storm arise,
No cloud to hide the joys we love,
Nor shut the sunlight from our eyes.

Thus unto Thee our all we leave,
Deal with us, Lord, as Thou seest best,
And lead our trusting footsteps on,
To dwell at last in Thy sweet rest.

September, 1885. D. F. M.

WIVES AND WOMEN.

A SUNDAY AFTERNOON TALK WITH WORKING PEOPLE.

IT is surprising what a way young fellows have of getting to like other men's sisters better than their own. And in that part of the country in which I lived as a lad, the youth who falls in love with a girl is said to have "got a woman." If I may here and now speak of the unmarried women in this sense, we are prepared for our address on Wives and Women.

I am glad to see such crowds of you men here. When I first selected this subject, it was my intention to exclude the women, and have a plain straight talk with men. I have, as you see, changed my purpose and allowed the women to come. It struck me that it would be best to open the doors and let them come in, for the men are such poor hands at keeping secrets, that in half-an-hour after my address anything I might say to them would be all about the town!

Now I suppose that most of you men have got either wives or women. And I daresay some of you have women and wish they were your wives. Whilst, on the other hand, some of you who have wives wish they were only women. However that may be, I want to divide the men in my audience into two classes—married and single—and address you under each head.

I. *First, then, I will say a few words to single men.* I am going to venture upon giving you advice. Don't be in too great haste about getting a wife. You need not be afraid that all the good women will be secured before you can make a choice, even if you are long about it. But it is not for me to advise you when to tell some young woman that you want her to be your wife. I must take another line.

1. *When you do begin to look out, select a woman.* You smile as if I thought you would be foolish enough to choose anything else. What I mean is, look for womanly qualities, queenly virtues, and those other graces which are so necessary in those who are to make good wives. Some young fools get charmed with a beautiful face, and carried away entirely with a head of curls. You need not despise beauty, but it will pay you best to look at the *character of the woman* rather than at her face. Mere beauty is but a poor thing on which to keep house and manage a family. Whilst to the eyes of fond affection, the plain features of the good wife will be as beautiful as the lilies of the field, and as lovely as the flowers of May.

Yes, men, look for women who can and will look well to the interests of your little homes. Find out those who have habits of thrift, of industry, and who know well the value of a sovereign when they get one. Unite yourselves to those charming girls who have grown up in the fear and love of God, and whose habits of

life make you think that they believe that cleanliness is next to godliness.

If you want only playthings and not wives—if you want dolls, then let me advise you to go to Barnett's toy shop in the Arcade, and give a pound or thirty shillings for a good big one. Then when, like children, you are tired of it, because all the colour and wax and show have gone, you can throw it away, and go and buy another new one. I heard of a man who married a flashy girl. Soon after the happy event, he met an old shopmate who asked him how he liked his wife. "Like her! Why, bless you, man," said he, "she is a perfect gem. I don't think there's another wife like her in the whole town. She's an angel. I believe I could eat her, I like her so well." Some twelve months or so afterwards, the same man met him again, and, after a friendly greeting, inquired about this angelic wife. "Oh, don't name her," said he, in sadness. "Don't name her! Why, what's in the wind? You told me, when I saw you last, that you could eat her!" With an emphasis that was as suggestive as it was expressive and coarse, he instantly replied, "Ay, man, I wish I had eaten her. It would have saved me a world of trouble and sorrow."

2. *You may perhaps ask me what sort of girl you should select.* I fear this would be a difficult task. If I could and would tell you, you would not follow my advice if it at all crossed your preferences.

But I would strongly advise you to pay but little heed to those goody-goody people who say, "Be sure you never select a factory girl. And be very careful and keep clear of servants."

I dare say that among factory girls, as among the girls of those who employ them, there may be some who are no better than they should be. But for honesty, virtue, industry, piety, and generosity I can find you thousands among the factory workers as noted as among any other class. And as to servants—well, I am forced to believe that some are none too good. I dare say many mistresses have a great deal of trouble with them. But I am sure there are a great many servants who have a world of trouble with their mistresses.

Then other people will tell you that you must be sure to make careful inquiry about a girl's mother. "See that she comes of a good family," &c., &c. All this is very good and very proper. I know no advantage to a girl so great as to have a good mother. Napoleon was once asked what he considered the greatest need of France at that moment? He is said to have given his reply in one word—"Mothers." It is often said, and there is much in it, "She who rocks the cradle rules the world." But good mothers do not always send good girls into the world. Take up the grand old Bible, and read those deeply interesting historic records of the Hebrew nation. What will you find? That, by a strange fate, the bad son often had the good father, whilst the good son often had the bad father. So is it in these days. It would be madness and folly to suspect a girl or to pass a girl whose chief fault was a bad mother.

My advice is very simple—*Ask how she treats her mother.* Does she dress herself like a lady, wearing the latest fashion in bonnets, and that mysterious article of ladies' wearing apparel known by the strange name of "improver," whilst her poor mother has no change of dress? Is she out and off to all sorts of affairs, leaving her mother to toil and drudge at home because she happens to be poor? If so, you had better give her the go by.

3. *Beyond all things else, let me urge you to respect the honour of all women.* Let every woman receive at your hands such treatment as you wish for your own mother and sister to have from others. Never take advantage of the weakness of any woman; rather, let the weakness be a plea to you for protection. Do not be an associate of those who have low views of the honour of woman. At all times and in all places feel it a privilege to defend the character, the virtue, and the uprightness of all women. I must now hasten on.

II.—*In the second place, I must address a few words to married men.* And my words will be few. It would be using a very trite saying if I were to tell you that you will perhaps never know the real value of those wives—whom some of you, I fear, sadly neglect—until you have lost them. If you wish to know how great a boon it is to have good health, go down to the hospital and see those who have lost it. As you walk with noiseless step from bed to bed, and gaze upon the pale and pain-stricken faces of the unfortunate fellows who lie there, if you do not turn away and thank God for giving you ease and strength, you scarcely deserve the blessing. So, my friends, I fear some cannot fully appreciate all the advantages of having a pure, loving, faithful wife in a cottage home, until they come to see homes without wives and mothers. Has your mate lost the light of his home? Then pay a visit to it. See the neglected appearance of the place. Look at the children. Don't they sadly need the mother's presence? From such a scene I venture to think you will go to your own cottage, and feel grateful that the chair at the head of your table is not vacant, and that your children do not cry in sorrow for a loved one whose remains lie in the cold and silent grave.

Yes, men, a good wife is a great blessing. But I am surprised and grieved to see how soon some fellows seem to forget all their good manners and little acts of kindness to the women whom they have married. If I could paint I would try to make two pictures. One should represent before marriage, the other after marriage. If they faithfully represented the scenes as I have gazed upon them, they would be not less striking than suggestive. The other month my wife and I were going down the Bull-ring when we saw a woman with a baby on one arm, and a great market basket on the other, whilst another child was dragging at her heels, holding on by her frock. Behind her, with a short pipe in his mouth, and his hands in his pockets almost elbow deep, was her husband, taking things as easy as a lord. My wife said to me, when we had passed, "I do think that man ought to carry either the baby or the

basket." I quite agreed with her. If any of you men see yourselves in this sketch I hope you will try to mend.

Some of you may be ready to say to me: "It's all very fine for you to talk to us like that—but you don't know what the wives are." Perhaps I don't. I am ready to admit that some of them are very trying indeed. But as a rule I think they are better than the men. Of one thing I am quite sure—they get the smallest share of ease and rest, whilst they have the largest part of the suffering and self-denial. We are passing through a dark season of depression in trade just now, and many Birmingham men are unemployed and almost destitute. Now let me ask you, Who feels the pinch most in these times? Who is it that goes without the food to give it the husband and children? The wife and mother. Who is it cuts up and destroys her own clothes to make some for the little ones? The faithful loving wife and mother.

On Friday last my wife and I were out calling at some forty houses of the unemployed. At one place we saw what touched our hearts. In that house, there was but little furniture. It consisted of a table, a chair, and a sort of bench. Three little children were there, all practically babies. There was not a pennyworth of food in the house, and the last the children had eaten had been given by a neighbour almost equally poor. The poor woman was in distress expecting to be put into the street by the landlord. On the previous Saturday all the poor fellow could bring home was twopence, and that he had borrowed. Twopence to find fire and food for husband, wife and three little ones over Sunday. On that Sunday when many of you were warmed, clothed, and well fed, those little children and their parents, sat in that all but empty room, most of the day before a fireless grate. Oh, my friends, it is hard, very hard for a *man* in such a case; but when you have done and said all you can, it is *far harder for a woman.*

Having said this much to urge you to prize and help your wives, may I go a step further, and ask you to worship your wife's God? How often does it happen that all the praying, all the religion, in a home is left to the wife! How is this? Have you men no souls? Or is it because you do not care for them? Or do you even get the foolish notion that God does not care for your souls? If this last idea has got any hold upon you, let me try to dispel it at once. God cares for us all, far more than we care for ourselves. Does the mother forget her child? She may do. Some even have done, but God never forgets His. We are His. He made us for His glory, and not that He might forget us. He created us in His own likeness, and loves us with His own big heart. He wants us to love Him. Take no notice of those men who try to make you believe that He has no care for you, and sends men into the world for a few short years, only that at the end they may be hurried into perdition. There is not a man among you but God cares for him. The Son of man, the Son of God, the Saviour of men, shed tears over those Jews who rejected the offers of His mercy, and even prayed for those who nailed Him to the cross. In like manner He

weeps over everyone of you, and wants you to come to Him that you may rest your heads upon His bosom, and hear how His heart beats in love for you. "He willeth not the death of any sinner." His cry to the wandering sheep is, "Ye will not come to Me that you might have life."

Men of Birmingham, men for whose home-coming the Saviour stands waiting, let me urge you to find your way with your wives to some place of worship to-night, and let the day, at its close, find you on your knees before that God who is kind and good to us all, and whose mercy and love have sheltered and shielded us in all life's journey. Amen.

Birmingham. CHARLES LEACH.

MAKE HOME HAPPY.

ONE of the most beautiful epitaphs I ever heard of came to my notice a day or two ago. It was this simple sentence, prepared by a husband for the grave of the wife with whom he had lived for more than fifty years:—

"SHE ALWAYS MADE HOME HAPPY."

Now I do not doubt but that some women are divinely called to occupy public places, and to be leaders among men; but no woman need be ashamed, I think, to have this sentence carved upon her tombstone as an epitome of her life-work.

The happiness of a home does not consist in the abundance of the things which it possesseth, but in its atmosphere of peace and good will. This is why some homes that have in them all that money can buy are not as happy as others that have no pictures upon their walls, and whose floors are carpetless. Nothing will make a home so miserable as ill-temper. Theodore Parker said a great many weak and wicked things, but he certainly spoke the truth when he said: "A single person of sour, sullen temper—what a dreadful thing it is to have such a one in a house! There is not myrrh and aloes and chloride of lime enough in the world to disinfect a home of such a nuisance as that. No riches, no elegance of mien, no beauty of face, can ever screen such persons from utter vulgarity."

A letter which came into my home yesterday, bringing tidings of the death of a friend, brought also his wife's testimony that during all their married life, let her say and do what she would, he never spoke unkindly. And he was not a professing Christian. Oh, with what stinging rebuke does such an example come to many of us who are the avowed disciples of the meek and lowly Jesus!

Why is home so bright and cheerful always when company comes? We get out our best things and wear our best looks, and husband and wife are almost as polite and kind to one another as they were just before they were married. Why not have perpetual sunshine?

C. D. CRANE.

THE HIGH HILL OF GOD.

THE jewel of truth in the 16th verse of the lxviii Psalm, "Why leap ye, ye high hills?" &c., is well worthy of its poetic setting. Looking from the little hill of Zion on Lebanon, and Hermon, and the great range of Bashan, the poet, to whose mind there was something greater than mere physical greatness, exclaims: "Why leap ye, ye high hills?" "What boots it that ye exult in your towering height and vast extent; it is this little hill of Zion that God has chosen to dwell in. There is much greater reason for exultation in this single fact, than in all the natural strength, beauty, and sublimity to which ye can lay claim." "The hill of God is as the hill of Bashan: an high hill as the hill of Bashan;" high in another sense: the spiritual height of the created universe. Exultation was natural to these spiritualized Hebrew poets when they thought of the hill of God: "Beautiful for situation the joy of the whole earth is Mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King. God is known in her palaces for a refuge. Walk about Zion, and go round about her: tell the tower thereof. Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces; that ye may tell it to the generation following. For this God is our God for ever and ever: He will be our guide even unto death."

It is no strained typology that finds in the glories of Mount Zion foreshadows of the greater glories of the Christian Church. Modern Jews can close their eyes to it. Clinging with even a firmer hold than that which characterised the most degenerate of their forefathers to an idea of greatness which is centred in outward glory, they have never understood the words addressed to their wiser brethren in the Epistle to the Hebrews: "Ye are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel." In the fulfilling era, the hill of God is more clearly perceived to scale the skies, while, at its base, and on its slopes, are the eager watchers for the dawn in the morning land.

It will be quite in keeping with the analogy of Scripture to regard the Psalmist's question as if put in view, not of Lebanon and Bashan, but of certain world-powers which seem to overshadow the Christian Church by their greatness, and tend to make us feel, in some moods of the mind, that, in the contest for supremacy, the Church may not come off even second best. Round the heights of Zion the clouds and mists are often dense to our feebly penetrating spiritual gaze, while out earthwards, plainly visible to every eye, great world-powers shoot up their huge masses as if in contemptuous challenge to all that can be seen of the little hill of Zion.

Mr. Matthew Arnold, in a celebrated address delivered at Liverpool some time ago, pointed out what he considered to be the great want in three great nations of the present day—the French, the German, and the English nation. The French, he said, were lacking in *morality*; the Germans in *civil courage*; the English in *lucidity*. Without inquiring into the validity of this whole charge, there is something in that part of it which relates to ourselves that lends itself to a certain use in connection with our topic. It is certainly a grave fault in the character of Englishmen, that they should be content to see darkly, where they might, if they would, see clearly. Whether the fault is in any sense peculiarly distinctive of the English race, I do not pause to inquire. But a greater striving after lucidity would tend to give more sober views to those among us—and they form a large part of the grit of the nation—who think—or who live as if they thought that there is nothing within the range of man's powers which confers such a distinction upon him as unrivalled business activity and commercial enterprise. Looking at this modern Bashan, which has assumed such unparalleled dimensions, any one who has not been drawn into the current feels tempted to ask, What is all the exultation about? One may have nothing but praise for a Business activity which combines with it higher pursuits, and does not crush man's spiritual capacity, and yet stand appalled at the very different aspect which the Business life of to-day presents to even a mere casual observer. A sickly religionism which will not fit into business anyhow; an asceticism which flies from the world: these are delusions; but grosser, if not so palpably weak and vapid, is the well-nigh entire absorption in business-life so characteristic of men who have it in them to develop a splendid manhood. And it only needs the gift of lucidity, of which Matthew Arnold speaks: the power of determining to see things clearly, to convince those whose exultation is in the acquirement of wealth *at any cost*, that even if they gained the whole world, and lost themselves, there would be no profit in the transaction. Verily this great English nation is lacking, as our mentor reminds us, in lucidity! Its eye for spiritual reality has become dimmed. The Church grieves over the fatality, and stands like a guardian from whose care his ward has escaped to pursue a headlong career the issue of which must be disastrous.

Look, for a moment, at another of these high hills of modern times. I would speak with all possible respect of literature. Literature is one of those mighty forces which might subserve the interests of religion, and which, as a matter of fact, has done so to a very large extent. But more than enough remains of a distinctly hostile character, to justify us in placing this portion side by side with a mere worldly commercial activity, as a Lebanon on whose brows infected vapours rest instead of the snows of heaven. We cannot shut our eyes to the fact that men are placing themselves beyond the warning voice of the Church to listen, during their leisure hours, and especially on the Sunday, to the siren voice of silly, and worse than silly, novels; to the haughty voice of a not

inconsiderable body of scientific literature disdainful of religion, and contemptuous towards teachers of religion; to the blasphemous voice of certain newspapers loved not wisely but too well.

But why speak of these things to the readers of this *Magazine*, who have, presumably, not been sucked into the maelstrom of a heedless pursuit of wealth, and who do not prefer the pages of a mere worldly or irreligious press to wholesome literature? I do so to emphasise the need there is of the Church, which, it is to be feared, is a mere name to great masses around us, bestirring and asserting herself in the midst of the world. I maintain—what perhaps Mr. Arnold would not allow—that the Christian Church, in so far as she is true to herself, possesses in a most important sense that gift of lucidity, in which, we are told, the nation as a whole is lacking. Her members, if anybody, should be able to look through the shows of things, and take their stand upon reality. If this great nation is wanting in lucidity, it is to a great degree because it is not Christian save in name. All the while, God is desirous of making the Christian Church the light of the world, the salt of the earth, the leaven which shall leaven the whole worldly lump.

It will not do, however, for us to sit down comfortably in our pews every Sunday, fold our arms complacently, and say, in full view of those world-powers, which are as Lebanon, and Hermon, and Bashan, "Why leap ye, ye high hills? this is the hill which God desireth to dwell in." Some of us seem so fully convinced of the final triumph of Christianity, that we will not stir a step to hasten it. The right use to be made of such a conviction is to make it a ground of confidence while we devote ourselves to Christian work. In this way, it will be made over into what it surely deserves to become,—a continual inspiration! Surely we love the Church of God well enough, not only to sing about it, and talk about it, but to work for it! I am quite sure that if we loved the Church as well as the Psalmist did the holy hill of old, we should be found adopting aggressive measures and carrying them faithfully forward towards the glorious goal. And the doing of this work, so long slighted in many parts of the vineyard, and entered upon by some agencies not half so competent for it, would result not in leaving undone other parts of the Church's varied duty, but in the better doing of them all. Christian souls would be joyous that are now sorrowful; feeble knees would be strengthened; unillumined minds would be enlightened; and dull hearts cheered in beholding the kingdom of God and of His Christ winning its ever-widening way through the nations. "For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth. . . . I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, who shall never hold their peace day nor night: ye that make mention of the Lord (or ye that are the Lord's remembrancers) keep not silence, and give Him no rest, till He establish, and till He make Jerusalem a praise in the earth." (Isa. lxii. 1, 6, 7.)

J. MACRAE SIMCOCK.

YOUNG FOLKS' CORNER.

TAKE CARE.

LITTLE children, you must seek
  Rather to be good than wise;
For the thoughts you do not speak
  Shine out in your cheeks and eyes.

If you think that you can be
  Cross and cruel and look fair,
Let me tell you how to see
  You are quite mistaken there.

Go and stand before the glass
  And some ugly thought contrive;
And my word will come to pass
  Just as sure as you're alive.

What you have and what you lack,
  All the same as what you wear,
You will see reflected back;
  So, my little folks take care!

And not only in the glass
  Will your secrets come to view;
All beholders, as as they pass,
  Will perceive and know them, too.

Goodness shows in blushes bright,
  Or in eyelids drooping down,
Like a violet from the light;
  Badness, in a sneer or frown.

Cherish what is good, and drive
  Evil thoughts and feelings far;
For, as sure as you're alive,
  You will show for what you are.

ALICE CARY.

NEAR THE LORD'S TABLE.

No. V.—PRIESTS UNTO GOD.

RIESTHOOD denotes the right of approach unto God. To be a saved man is to be also a priest, with a free and clear access unto the Father. A man without any love of God in his heart can never draw near the throne of holiness; for the distance of the unloving heart is an eternal going away from heaven. But as soon as the heart turns toward home, and begins to wait for the smile of God; as soon as the will endeavours to arrange its impulses in a Divine order; as soon as the conscience is awakened by the penetrating rays of righteousness; as soon as the man stands beside the Christ in the fresh morning glow of penitence and affection, and claims Him as Saviour and Brother—then does he obtain the right of free approach unto God.

Every Christian—every saved man—is a priest. Christ came not to grant the honour of priesthood to small classes of exclusive men, but to give to the universal human soul its native dignity. Man as man—redeemed from sin by the blood of Christ—becomes an ordained priest in the temple of God. He is clothed in "holy garments"; he wears upon his head a "golden crown"; the hem of his robe is adorned round about with golden bells and pomegranates; and he has the right of kneeling in the holy of holies beneath the overshadowing of outstretched wings of cherubims.

A Christian is a Christian for himself first, and then for others. If the Christian Priesthood gave man the title of access unto God on his own behalf only, it would be but a poor and cheerless gift. But the saved man is privileged to carry the sins of the whole world to the Throne of Grace, and to plead for the infinite pity to come down and heal the infinite sorrow of the earth. What would the gift of prayer have been to Monica, if she had been told, "Thou mayest pray for thyself as many prayers as thou wilt, but not one sigh for thine unbelieving son Augustine!" Her bitter tears would have fallen back upon her own heart, and left it scorched and dead. But she won the franchise of the Christian Priesthood, and every prayer for her unsaved son throughout the long and melancholy years of his unbelief stood before God in a baptism of sacred tears.

Every Christian is ordained to be a reflected Christ. The attributes of the Saviour are bestowed upon him, and he becomes the living Gospel of Christ to men. When Christ said, "I am the light of the world," He did not forget to say also, "Ye are the light of the world." Every man of God is a pillar of fire to guide the erring; he is a fountain of water in the desert to refresh the thirsty; he is the bread of life in a barren place to feed the hungry; he is consolation to the sad and forsaken; he is eternal hope to the despairing. The moment he fills his lamp with oil and lights the sacred flame, he is "this dark world's light"—broken and trembling it may be, but still a light—a flame from the undimmed Pillar of

Fire. Weary travellers of the wilderness are cheered by its kindly glow; those who have lost their way on the bleak and wintry moors take heart again, and follow its heavenly guidance; and many that are far, far away in the cold distances of the unloving heart learn that love is not gone out in the heart of the Father.

Man as the brother of Christ is a son of God. His sonship gives him the right to help God in saving the whole world from sin. His prayers of intercession are to be as large as the love of God, and his mercifulness is to be as the dew of heaven dropping upon every human soul. This prerogative of the Christian Priesthood is in these days a buried treasure; and the heart of the Church catholic has so narrowed and strained its compassion that it is afraid to tell God the tale of its deepest sorrow. It keeps its Gethsemane closed against the angel of help; it hides its cross in the gloom of its own fearfulness. We are not open-hearted in our conversations with God; we are afraid to tell Him that we would like to see the shadows of sin passing out of His world. And yet every saved man is called to the assistance of the Almighty in healing the sin of humanity.

A strange story is told us of St. Clare, of Monte Falco. She was once interceding for a man guilty of great crimes, who had come to the last verge of life with his conscience unawakened. Often she prayed for him, although she felt as if she were driven back from the throne by some unseen power. At last she placed herself before the judgment-seat of Christ, "as if she herself were laden with all this man's sins," and in an agony of intercession became herself the sinner, bearing the punishment of his crime, and looking to the Divine mercy with an infinite appeal. God could not pass by such a prayer. It was the right of the Christian Priesthood that she had obtained, and she used it well. It is this privilege that remains to-day in the whole Church—so large, but so neglected.

Every Christian mother is a mother of Christ. Long ago He asked, "Who is My mother, and who are My brethren?" And the answer that He gave to His own question, as "He stretched His hand towards His disciples, and said, Behold My mother and My brethren!"—remains to-day as the title of every saved man and woman to share in the travail of His soul. If every Christian woman stood nearer Jesus Christ, and kneeled down with Him in the night of unfaith on the lonely mountain tops of prayer, who can say what precious blessings God might give to them and to the Son? Christian motherhood is privileged of God to shelter the whole world with its Divine pitifulness; Christian fatherhood is permitted to meet every prodigal with welcome, and open for him the door of the Father's house.

John Henry Newman is a priest to me—not as an ordained official of the Roman Church, but in virtue of the Christ-likeness that shines through his life and character. I cannot follow him into the dusk of a traditional piety; I cannot follow him as he seeks for the living Christ among dead sacraments; I cannot

follow him as he leans his head to rest upon the bosom of a visible Church; but, nevertheless, he is a priest to me. For when he pleads for the guidance of the "kindly light," I take his hand, and kneel down with him. For me, too, "the night is dark, and I am far from home"; for me, too, one step is enough, and the distant scene must remain hidden in the radiance of God's love; I, too, "have loved to choose and see my path"; my soul has walked in the garish day, and lost the sweet face of Jesus; my will has kneeled in the dust beneath the rule of pride, and I ask God in His loving-kindness to forget past years; and now I too would fain believe that the heavenly power will lead me on "o'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent," until I see angel faces that have watched me invisible all night long smile upon me at the break of day. It is there where Newman is a priest for me. But I have another priest—a humble Christian, ordained only of God, his priesthood a direct gift from the hands of Christ. Day by day he intercedes for me; and the earth hears not his prayers, and no Church stands between him and heaven. He is a brother of Christ, and he knows that Christ is not ashamed of His brethren.

The Christian Priesthood, furthermore, gives to every Christian the prerogative of forgiving sin. Christ taught His disciples to pray, "Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone that is indebted to us." Every unsaved man is in debt to the saved man. He trespasses the laws of Christian righteousness and love. A sin against the Father is also a sin against the child; and the wound that is given to the Saviour is given also to the disciple. When, therefore, the Father forgives a sinner, He asks His child to come and help Him. But the child finds it hard to help his Father. He himself is not free from the stain of sin, and his pity is too weak to walk beside the "strong Son of God." But still he is chosen of God to make the way of repentance easier for the penitent. If this be the hardest task of the Christian Priesthood, it is also the most Godlike. To help a man to hate his sin—to help him to forget the years of hardness and crime in the far country—to cleanse the ideals of life of the dust that has gathered upon them—to lift the burden that keeps conscience sitting down beside the grave of godless days—to remove the shame that forbids the soul to look up in the face of God—this is the work in which every child of the Kingdom is called to partake. The supreme authority of forgiving sins rests with Christ alone; but He gives to all His friends the title of bearing witness that the deed is done, and of receiving the forgiven into the communion of saints. Christ alone can forgive the Magdalene; but every Christian helps Christ to forgive by standing between her and the scorn of the world, by sharing her burden of remorse, and by encouraging the new life in her soul. We are "priests unto God" when we help the man who is caught in the terrible rush of the moral currents of life—when we place a soothing hand on the aching brow of disappointment—when we hide the frown of the Pharisee from the wounded heart of some sinning and forsaken soul—when we cast a glance of pity on

some forsworn disciple—when we allow some repentant Judas to cast down his guilt money on the table, and make it less hard for him to forgive himself.

"Priests unto God." The right of free access unto God has been won for every Christian. The higher a man rises in the experience of spiritual things the more he is privileged to use the personal blessings of the Christian Priesthood. Who lives nearest God has the golden key to open most doors in heaven. Who has been oftenest to Calvary has most power to forgive. He is the brother of Christ whose soul has been touched by the anguish of the human struggle. She is the mother of Christ who loves the lost children of God, and makes the threshold of heaven shine with holy tears.

Hull. H. ELVET LEWIS.

JAMES HERBERT'S DIARY;

Or, Experiences with Seekers after God.

By the Rev. ROBERT TUCK, B.A., Author of "Netley Independent Chapel," "Links Wanted," &c.

VIII.—CHILD PIETY.

VISITING my friend Herbert one day, he took me with him to a cottage in the outskirts of the town, where a boy of some ten years of age lay in the closing stages of a long and fatal illness. It was a very striking case, about which Herbert evidently wanted a serious talk with me. The little fellow was wasted to a shadow, but his brain was unnaturally large, and his eyes unnaturally bright. His mother was full of wonder and admiration over the marvellous piety of this her only son, and encouraged him to talk about religious things. I must confess my surprise at the matters of religious knowledge, feeling, and experience with which this boy dealt, in a manner better suited to an established Christian of sixty years. Herbert tried to soothe and quiet the over-excited brain, getting the child to listen rather than to speak. Some would have regarded this as a marvellous triumph of grace, but I could see by the way in which Herbert touched the boy's burning forehead, that he suspected there was more "fever" than "fervour" about it all.

As we walked away from the cottage my friend was silent until we reached the main road into the town, and then he said, in quite an abrupt way,—"What is the piety of a strong, healthy, hearty lad like?" I did not answer him, for I knew he was thinking, and would soon say something more.

"All the pious children are going to die, or do die. Can anybody show me a happy healthy boy, brimful of life, who is truly converted to God, genuinely pious? I should like much to carefully study such a case. I believe that the converting grace of

God reaches children as well as grown people, but disease too often makes a counterfeit show of piety; and I would rather see the signs of conversion in sanctified boyishness and girlishness, than in exaggerated and unnatural and morbid expressions such as we have just listened to."

"You remind me," I replied, "of a funeral sermon, preached by the late William Jay, of Bath, on the death of my grandfather, who was one of his deacons. A sentence or two from that sermon has remained among the treasures of my memory. He said, 'When a person passes from us we ask how he *died*, but surely the great, the grave, the all-important question is, How did he *live*?' I have often felt just what you have expressed, that I should like to see and study the case of a converted child who was going to live. I am sure there must be a marvellous difference between a sick child's piety and a healthy child's piety; and if we understood better the signs of godliness proper to a strong, hearty boy, we should have much clearer aims, and much wiser ways, in our endeavours to influence the children."

I must not further detail our conversation, but the subject had evidently taken hold of Herbert, and he was sure to think it out, and satisfy his own mind upon it.

Some time after there was a week's mission for children in connection with Herbert's Sunday School. He took part in it, earnestly seeking to guide it to the best ends, but, all the while, critically observing all that was said and done, not allowing himself to be carried away by emotion, but watching every opportunity of adding right knowledge, and serious resolve, to high feeling.

On the morning after one of the meetings, his eldest boy tapped gently at his study door, and came in looking so quiet and serious that Herbert saw there was something on his mind. Coming round to his father's chair he said,—"Oh, father, I wanted to tell you. I gave my heart to Jesus last night."

"Did you, my boy," said Herbert, "I am very glad to hear it. Once given to Jesus, you must never take it back into your own keeping again. But what led you to make such a resolve last night, my boy?"

"Oh," said Arthur, "Mr. Moore spoke so beautifully, and the others were crying round me, and when the speaking was over, Mr Moore asked those of us who wanted to give our hearts to Jesus to come into the vestry, and several others went, and I went."

Herbert felt the truth had been spoken by his boy. He had been carried over into something like a religious decision upon a wave of religious emotion. He knew that this was quite legitimate, and that God often is pleased to use an arousing of feeling for securing the final decision of the will, but he was sceptical as to the influence of decisions made in times of excitement *upon young children*. He had a long and earnest talk with Arthur, but only one of the things he impressed upon him can here be recalled.

"You say you have given your heart to Jesus, but what have you given it to Him for? and what is He to do with it? If anybody

really gives his *heart* he gives his *life* along with it; for the heart carries with it the character and the conduct. Above everything else, Jesus is the 'Saviour,' and you have given your heart to Him as your Saviour, and He will want to be really saving you every day from your faults and your sins. You know, Arthur, that being a Christian is not attending pleasant meetings, and singing nice songs; it is being good, and growing more Christlike every day. It is, always trying to do right, for Jesus' sake and in Jesus' strength. I have had to talk to you very seriously about some faults; you are not always strictly truthful; you are often very selfish at play; and mother is often grieved because you do not 'obey quick.' If you have given heart and conduct to Jesus, He will be sure to say, 'Now, Arthur, we must at once see to getting the heart and conduct saved, cleansed, and set right.'"

They knelt down together, and as Herbert prayed with his lad, the decision of the night before was renewed in a quieter and more hopeful way. Arthur gave heart, and conduct too, to Jesus the Saviour.

That night Herbert wrote in his diary some of his thoughts about child conversion, and child piety, as follows:—

"Unless emotional appeals to children are wisely watched, followed, and fostered, I fear that their influence will be injurious rather than beneficial. With the fullest belief in the converting grace of God, and the regeneration of child-souls by the power of the Holy Ghost, I yet observe that the Spirit is pleased to use ordinary and human instrumentalities, and we must therefore see to it that our agencies are the wisest and best possible. I confess to a grave fear of the influence on young children of heated rooms, exciting hymns, emotional atmospheres, pathetic tales, arousing appeals, and gregarious flocking into after meetings. That boy of mine was simply carried away by emotion, and if the beginning thus made is not wisely watched and fostered, the emotions will certainly fade away as 'morning-cloud and early dew.' Testing him, I could plainly see that there was sentiment without knowledge, feeling without principle; if I may so express it, decision without resolve.

"I have not allowed my elder girl to attend the meetings, because of her strong susceptibility to religious emotion. In her I can excite feeling whenever I please, and therefore I am especially watchful over her, lest the capacity for religious feeling should exhaust itself in early life, and give place to scepticism in later years.

"I have often asked myself what is the *sense of sin* which a young child may be expected to have? On that sense of sin his idea of Jesus as a Saviour must depend. It is easy enough to get children to say they are 'sinners,' but what do they precisely mean by the word? In every other kind of teaching we avoid the use of general terms; we teach the concrete first, and from it we rise to the general. But, in religion, we still satisfy ourselves with the large words 'sin,' 'salvation,' 'repentance,' 'faith,' and seldom stop to get at the children's ideas about them.

"Does a child attach any real meaning to the expression, 'Jesus came to save the world'? Must we not get these large terms translated into the child-spheres? It is altogether better to say, 'Jesus came into the world to save children from their sins of lying, disobedience, selfishness, and cruelty.' Jesus is just the Saviour they want in their little lives; and proving His power *now*, they will find He grows in saving power with their growth, and they will want Him to save them from their manhood sins by-and-by.

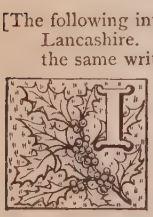
"Hot-house religion is bad for children. We had better keep close to the Bible rule, 'Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.' The training is the continuous influence of years, not the forced result of an hour's excited meeting.

"Under our present conditions of Christian family and Sunday School life, I am persuaded that we should look for the conversion and decision of our children, as the Holy Spirit's sealing of gradual and continuous instruction and influence during their early years; and that all emotional aids had better be kept within narrow and careful limitations. It is supremely important that *child piety* should be genuinely *child-like*."

CHURCH-AID AND HOME MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

I.—THE DEATH-CRY OF ONE WHO HAD NEGLECTED TO SEEK THE LORD.

[The following interesting account is furnished by the pastor of an aided church in Lancashire. We hope in our next number to give under this heading, from the same writer, an account of "Pioneer Work in a Colliery Village."—ED.]



WELL remember visiting a young man who died at the age of twenty-three. His case shows how hard a matter it is to die when a man has neglected to seek the Lord until the eleventh hour, even in those cases in which Christian charity prompts us to believe in the sincerity of the sinner's repentance. I had heard that the young man, who was the son of praying parents, was very much averse to the subject of death being spoken of in his hearing. Not wishing to force myself upon his notice, I waited a few days until he had come to a better and more submissive state of mind. Then I called upon him. It was about four o'clock in the afternoon. He was glad to see me, and said, "I heard you were intending to call and see me. I have been expecting to see you all the day. I have thought every knock at the door was yours." My young friend had been a soldier for a short time, but had been sent home on account of his complaint—consumption. As he had led a prodigal's life, I read to him the parable of the two sons, or a part of it, and said, "You know the rest." "I do, I do; I have read it many a time—explain it to

me—explain it to me, will you?" I did so. Paying subsequent visits to him I found him always ready to receive instruction in spiritual things. On one occasion I pointed him to Jesus as the only hope of the soul, from the words of the Saviour, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." I also pointed out to him the absolute necessity of repentance, and of the new birth from above. When I had done, he said, with the greatest concern, "Just kneel down and pray for me a little."

On another occasion he said to his poor distressed mother, "Mother, this is a dark way." "Which way, John?" she replied. "The way of death," was his answer. On the evening preceding his death, she said to him, "Well, John, how art thou in thy soul?" He responded, "I feel better, mother, than I did. I do think I shall get to my sister and father now, but I have nothing to rest on—only Jesus Christ."

On the day on which he died he called his mother and brothers to his bed-side, and taking each by the hand said, "Good-bye, farewell," adding to the youngest, "Be a good lad, be a good lad,"—and, then, with a death-throe, turned upon his back, and fixing his eyes on the top of the room, he cried, with a strong and earnest cry, "Lord God Almighty, have mercy on my poor soul, a miserable sinner that I am; but, for Christ's sake, have mercy on my poor soul." Soon after he died. Can we doubt God heard the prayer of that poor, broken-hearted young man? I have no hesitation in saying I believe the Lord saved him at the last moment as he had done the dying thief aforetime on the cross; and yet there is something sad in being only snatched as a brand from the burning, and in being saved so as by fire and with the skin of our teeth. If there can be regret in the world of light, surely such a soul would grieve deeply and sincerely that it had wasted a life which might have been as sweet as the light, and as helpful to the world as the dew and the rain, but which, to say the least, has been only barren and useless. How much better is it to live a good, noble, and pure life, a life of faith on the Son of God, who loved us and gave Himself for us, and to hear Him say, as He welcomes us to the home of the blessed in heaven, with an abundant entrance, "Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

II.—MEETING OF COUNCIL OF CHURCH-AID SOCIETY.

An important meeting of the Council was held on October 9th, at Burslem, Mr. Henry Lee, M.P., presiding. The following resolutions, among others, were passed:—

1. That the Council urge all the Associations, before the next annual voting of grants, to appoint a special committee for thoroughly revising all grants and considering what changes might with advantage be made in the methods hitherto adopted in determining the same.

2. That the form of return made in the month of January be altered so as to

provide for details of the proposed expenditure, similar to those given in the month of April.

3. That, with the view of enabling the Council to exercise the powers provided for in Rule VI. (e)—(*a*) The County Executives shall be asked to give, in the month of April, information of every case in which grants have been agreed upon by a majority, giving the numbers voting *pro* and *con.*, including and distinguishing between the votes in District Committee, the Executive Committee, and the General Meeting, and in the January next to give, as far as possible, similar information in regard to the grants made last April. (*b*) To send with the return in January a copy of the information on which it is based. The Committee suggests that duplicate returns should be obtained from the aided churches, and that one should be remitted to the Central Office.

4. That steps be taken by the Special Committee to collate the rules of the several Associations and the suggestions of the Committee appointed in 1882, with the object of preparing for the guidance of the several Associations uniform rules for voting and general administration. The grouping of small churches to be specially considered by the County Associations.

5. That immediate steps be taken to secure an income for next year from the Associations and individual contributors, at least equal to that contributed last year by the Associations and the Jubilee Fund combined, including—(*a*) An appeal to all churches to contribute an increased amount to the funds of the several Associations, and with this view to organise a system of personal contribution as well as collections. (*b*) An appeal to the more opulent members of the denomination to give substantial annual subscriptions. (*c*) A letter to the Executives of all the County Associations asking their co-operation in this effort.

III.—CONGREGATIONAL MAGAZINE.

THE new arrangements as to the Church-Aid and Home Missionary Society will, as intimated in the September number, naturally affect this MAGAZINE. Beginning with the new volume, the responsibility of editing it will rest upon the secretary, Rev. Andrew Mearns. While maintaining its character as a family magazine, and being conducted in a popular manner, so as to secure its commercial success, special prominence will be given to Home Mission work of every description, its main object being to make a record of the Society's operations, and of evoking the interest and enthusiasm of subscribers.

THE CONGREGATIONAL UNION AT HANLEY.

THE autumnal meetings of the Congregational Union of England and Wales were held at Hanley, on October 5th and following days, under the most auspicious circumstances. About 700 pastors and representatives were in attendance. Excellent local arrangements were made to meet the wants of the visitors. Never was greater hospitality shown, nor meetings held at which more holy enthusiasm was manifested.

On the Monday the Union sermon was preached by the Rev. Dr. Parker, from Acts iv. 14, to a crowded congregation in the Tabernacle. An overflow meeting in the Circus was addressed by the Revs. A. C. Berry, of Wolverhampton, and J. Williamson, M.A., of Manchester. On the same evening more than 2,000 persons gathered in Bethesda Chapel at the autumnal meeting of the Congregational Total Abstinence Society, under the presidency of Mr. W. Woodall, M.P. Addresses were delivered by the Revs. G. M. Murphy, J. Ossian Davies, Charles Leach, and George Hinds.

The address "from the chair," by the Rev. Dr. Thomas, was admirable. Taking "Spiritual Religion" as his theme, the chairman spoke of "its perils and its powers" in such a manner as to elicit hearty approval. As Dr. Parker remarked, it was difficult to pass from it to the routine business which followed. This included a statement on behalf of the Jubilee Fund Committee, which showed that the promises to date have nearly reached £400,000, of which £346,000 have passed through the books of the fund. Reference was naturally

made to the shadow cast upon the fund by the loss sustained through Mr. Hudson's death. £2,400 have been promised towards the £8,000 deficiency.

Papers on the following subjects were read at the various sessions:—"Special Missions," by the Rev. Colmer Symes, B.A.; "Children of the Church and our duty to them," by the Rev. I. Morley Wright; "The present temper and spirit of the Churches in regard to Foreign Missionary work," by the Rev. H. Arnold Thomas, M.A.; "New Sacerdotalism and the New Puritanism," by the Rev. Principal Fairbairn, D.D.; "Home in its relation to Social Purity," by the Rev. J. P. Gledstone; "Losses in Church Membership through the removal of members from one district to another," by the Rev. Thomas Willis; "Christian View of Recreation," by the Rev. Alfred Norris; "Suggestions as to the future working of the Church-Aid and Home Missionary Society," by the Rev. Andrew Mearns; also, a paper by the Rev. W. M. Statham, on the question "Whether, without injury to the simplicity and spirituality of the public worship of the churches, any new method can be adopted which shall enable the people to take a more active part than at present in the service."

It will thus be seen that questions of a very important character were considered, and we doubt not that, if they are further discussed in the churches, great advantages to the future of Congregationalism will accrue.

Delegates attended not only from the Congregational Unions of Scotland and Ireland, but also from the Congregational or Free Churches' Union of Norway. This is the first time that public attention has been called in this country to the great religious awakening which is going on in Scandinavia, and of which much may have yet to be said.

Great public meetings were held in Hanley on the Tuesday, addressed by Mr. Woodall, M.P. (who presided), and the Revs. Drs. Dale, Hannay, and Bevan; on the Thursday, Mr. Henry Lee, M.P., was chairman, and the speakers, Revs. J. Morgan Gibbon, Charles Leach, and J. Guinness Rogers. On the Wednesday there was a Foreign Missionary meeting and valedictory service. Mr. A. J. Shepheard, chairman of the Board of Directors of the London Missionary Society, presided. The valedictory address was delivered by the Rev. J. A. Macfadyen, D.D.; and the Revs. W. F. Clarkson, B.A., R. W. Thompson, E. H. Jones, and several missionaries took part. On the same evening, a Welsh public meeting was held under the presidency of Mr. Thos. Williams, J.P.; the speakers being Revs. Job Miles (of Aberystwith) and E. Herber Evans (of Carnarvon). Altogether the meetings were excellent throughout, and we trust have left only pleasant memories behind. District meetings were held throughout the Potteries, and these also were in most cases very successful. D. B. H.

OUR LIBRARY TABLE.

We are glad to receive the second volume of the *People's Bible* (London, Hazell, Watson, and Viney), containing discourses upon Exodus, by the Rev. Joseph Parker, D.D. In these volumes Dr. Parker is undoubtedly at his best. Exodus he treats as "Phases of *Providence*: in leadership, in national deliverance, in organization, in codified human life, in all the mystery of human training and discipline, showing how the tabernacle of God is with men upon earth; a refuge, a judgment, a symbol." Every honest critic must frankly admit Dr. Parker's great expository power, and this series of volumes will place Bible students under great obligation to him. We trust he will be able to complete what he regards as the great work of his life.

We have received from the Religious Tract Society, Packet iii. of *Save the Banner* series of tracts, by Drs. Horatius Bonar, A. Saphir, the late Sir J. Y. Simpson, Bart., and others. A packet of *the Most Recent Tracts* for general distribution. These are well written, well printed, and should be circulated by thousands. Also, *A Glance at the Italian Inquisition*, translated from the German by John T. Betts. This sketch of Pietro Carnesecchi, giving his trial before the supreme Court of the Papal Inquisition at Rome, and his martyrdom in 1566, was recently published in Germany. We trust that it will serve to show many in England the true character of the unalterable Romish Church.

THE TEACHERS' PAGE.

INTERNATIONAL LESSONS FOR NOVEMBER.

THERE are five Sundays in this month, and the lessons bring before us three persons, and suggest for our study the incidents which reveal three characters. One lesson gives a closing glimpse of the good Elisha. Two deal with the person and mission of Jonah. And two are concerned with the private character and personal experience of King Hezekiah (2 Kings xiii. 14—25; Jonah i. 1—17; iii.; 2 Kings xviii. 1—12; xx. 1—17).

1. The time of a man's death is usually the time when his fellow-men try to make a fair estimate of his life and labours. We have sketches of great men in the newspapers as soon as they are dead. It was a fitting close of Elisha's honoured and gracious life that he should pass only through the natural frailties of old age. His closing act was in perfect harmony with his life—an encouragement to somebody to *put his trust in God.* That is precisely what Elisha had been doing ever since he responded to the Divine call. By his example, by his teaching, by his miracles, he had been constantly saying, everywhere and to everybody, "Trust in the Lord for ever, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength."

But the view I suggest we should take of these three men—Elisha, Jonah, and Hezekiah—is, that they were each put into God's school, and taught of the Lord. In this view, Elisha appears as a man taught of God through *his helpfulness to others.* For Elisha was a foreshadowing of Him who "went about doing good"; and we see in him how God sanctifies men who are self-denying, kindly, ready to serve, and always on the outlook for somebody to bless—somebody whom they may help to believe in God. Few of us can be Elijahs, or do Elijah's work; we can all be Elishas, and aid others in "trusting in God, and doing right."

2. Jonah is himself more interesting, as a study, than the incidents connected with Nineveh which he records. To read Jonah aright we must see in him a picture of themselves, which God painted for Israel, to convince that nation of its sin. The nation of Israel was, as it were, God's prophet, like Jonah. It received God's command to witness for the unity and spirituality of God to the world, just as Jonah received command to go to Nineveh and preach. It refused to do God's work, and followed its own devices, just as Jonah fled from God's presence, and formed his plan of doing his own will at Tarshish. It had to learn that it could neither escape God's control, nor God's judgments, even as Jonah had to learn when the wild storm arose. And Israel might also see that God's severe dealings were but designed to secure repentance, and a return to obedience; and that God would surely respond to such a spirit by a renewal of the national trust. But exactly this teaching *we* want as well as Israel, and as Jonah.

Or we may say, Jonah was taught of God *through personal failures.* And we, in God's mercy, may recover our steps if they have well-nigh slipped.

3. Hezekiah lived in very anxious times, when the folk around him—parties in the State, and courtiers in the palace—were urging him to trust this nation and that, rather than Jehovah. He needed to be put aside from the bustle of life for awhile; he needed to have character deepened by sanctified suffering; he needed to prove in his own personal experience how God can deliver and save, and what power there is in prayer.

So we may think of Hezekiah as a man taught of God *through times and experiences of suffering.* But in his story there is this warning: beware lest God's restoring mercies should lead to presumption, and spoil the spirit of our daily trust. For Hezekiah somehow lost the full sanctifying of his suffering-time.

Another line of thought which may be taken this month can but be briefly stated. See, from these lessons, what *goodness* is in the sight of God. 1. Goodness is *serving others.* Elisha. 2. Goodness is *obedience.* Jonah. 3. Goodness is *repentance of sin.* Ninevites. 4. Goodness is *energy in God's service.* Hezekiah's reformation-work. 5. Goodness is *prayerful submission to God's will.* Hezekiah's sickness.

But every one of these features of goodness is possible for us, in the grace and help of God. ROBERT TUCK.

"CLEAN OUT THE CLINKERS!"

THE little village church at Tarryall was in the first faint glow of revival. The weekly prayer meeting was well under way. It was much fuller than usual. It was much more fervent. There was a spiritual momentum which could not be easily resisted. The heavenly breeze stirred human hearts as the wind stirs the leaves of the trees. The heart of the minister was glad. Like a patient driver with a stalled load he had, for a long time, been using all sorts of devices to get out of the mire and rut of religious inanition. He had gathered up the sticks and stones of hindrance; he had smoothed the rugged roadway; he had gone ahead, and coaxed and entreated; he had fallen in the rear, and pushed and pressed; he had stood alongside, reins in hand, and cracked the ministerial whip; he had examined the religious harness, to see if it was chafing or binding anywhere; he had stroked and petted and spoken strong words of encouragement; he had beckoned the aid of a passing teamster, and sought advice and help; he had, finally, doubled up teams and loosened the brakes, and just now there was a perceptible tremor of the nerves and straining of the muscles in the veritable start up the hill.

It was a happy day in Tarryall. To change the figure, the match had been struck, and a little streak of flame was plainly visible. There would be a good warm fire presently. As I said before, the weekly prayer meeting was well under way. The religious drones, who had so long been living on the honey which the working-bees had hived, were bestirring themselves with pleasing alacrity. Pious misanthropes, who had been wont to bewail the desolations in Zion and "vex their righteous souls," like Lot, began to understand that the only way to get out of danger was to go forward. One after another rose, in quick succession, to make meek confession, or to utter strong words of hope. Presently, old Father Templeton's well-known voice was heard in the rear of the audience.

"Brethren," he said, "I've been a member of this church going on twenty years. I've seen the kindling of more than one revival like this. I've seen the little spark fanned to a little flame, and with great rejoicing we all huddled around the warm glow—for God knows we were shivering with cold. We spread out eager hands to the grateful blaze, and rubbed them with exultant gladness. But what else did we do? You know how it was as well as I do. After a brief interval, the fire died down. There was nothing left but smoke and cinders. The grate was full of fuel, but it had not ignited. Only the shreds of shavings and kindling had been

on fire. It seemed as if everything bid fair for a splendid warming. But it was a mere momentary flash. What was the matter, brethren? I'll tell you just what was the matter. The grate was stuffed full of clinkers. There was no genuine coal about it. It was only a vitrified mass of matter. You might just as well expect to burn cobble-stones. Let us learn a lesson from past experience. Let us clean out the clinkers. They clog up the grate. They are neither fire nor fuel. They absorb the heat and attain a glow, and pretend to be sending out heat on their own account. This is all a sham. They are only absorbents at the expense of the vitality and combustion that is about them. They glow with stolen light and heat, all the while increasing in bulk and obstructiveness. They must be cleared out before we can expect any sort of fire that will last. Clean out the clinkers! If you don't do it, we might just as well sit around a painted picture of a fire. It would give out just as much permanent warmth. It is all idle work, brethren, all idle—'as idle as a painted ship upon a painted ocean.' We must have the steady gleam and glow of genuine Christian character, and that will stand us in good stead for permanent Christian work. Let us clean out the clinkers, brethren; let us clean out the clinkers!"

Father Templeton gave his heroic message, and sat down. It proved to be an inspired message, for the clinkers were cleaned out of the little church grate in Tarryall, and the whole village got a good religious warming. Many buds of religious promise softened, and swelled into blossom and fruit. There was a rich harvest. Old Father Templeton had the gist of the matter in him. Christ in living form in individual lives is always and everywhere a potential gospel. It is a gospel easily interpreted. It is never misunderstood. Spiritual rapture is not necessarily righteousness. Spiritual ecstasy may be like the blaze from tissue paper. It may have as little lasting light and warmth in it; it may be too short-lived to do any good. Patient continuance in well-doing is the only true test of genuine dicipleship. We want a religion that comes to stay—a warm, glowing, radiant, quiet, unfaltering flame that burns on, with no thought of giving out—a fire whose fuel, supplied from the eternal hills, never fails.

I suppose there is great need that old Father Templeton's suggestion be carried out in many a church-heating apparatus. There is great need to clean out the clinkers. The fire of religious zeal would burn better. There is no doubt about it. And we have need of good warm fires, for some of us are so nearly frozen that nothing short of a red-hot stove will ever thaw us out. More is the pity. There is a show of warmth and life, but the vestal part waxes faint and feeble to the very chill of death. There must be kindled anew the fire of a genuine Christ-like love on the hearth-stone of the hearth. Every clinker of unbelief, selfishness, pride, and disobedience must be cleaned out, and the live coals from off the altar of a pure consecration must kindle an immortal flame, which shall warm and illumine our earthly pathway, until it emerges into the radiance and glory of the life everlasting. S. B. COOPER.

THE TRYING OF OUR FAITH.

THE true Christian often realizes what the apostle James says, "The trying of your faith worketh patience." How often and how sorely the believer is tried, he knows well. It is not all plain sailing on the voyage to heaven. It is not through the still waters of the Pacific Ocean that our vessel ploughs its way. We are exposed to storms from all points of the compass; shelter is often far away, and harbours of refuge are few and far between.

It is inevitable that it should be so. When we come to consider the circumstances which combine to create the happiness of our lives, and to observe that an alteration in any one of them may put the whole machinery of our happy life out of gear, and how the flight of time, the approach of disease, the subtle poison of the temper, will certainly influence our surroundings, we cease to wonder that the serenity of our life is rudely invaded by the Spirit of Disquiet, that, "Nature's sweet restorer, balmy sleep," flees from our pillow, and that our heart is aching with a pain that is all the greater if no one knows it but ourselves.

No, we cannot get away from trial, however we may think to guard our hearts against it; just because we are human, because there are those whom we trust and love, because there are institutions and principles that are very dear to us; we are open to attack, and in course of time must receive it.

It would not be well for us that we should find means for getting through life without a due measure of suffering and trial. The noblest qualities in our natures would have lain dormant had they not been called into life by the pressure of a great need.

The ability to pass through trial successfully is the criterion of worth. The more difficult, the more honourable, the more important a thing is, the severer are the tests which guard it. If you are worth anything it is because you have been tried and not been found wanting.

If God is trying you very severely, it is because He destines you for some high position in His service. It is the diamond which is cut and polished, not the road-side pebble. Remember that God never sends trials to His children too hard for them to bear. But for those that He means to stand nearer to Himself than others, for those that He means to do nobler and better work for Him than the rest of men, He apportions trials which shall test them to the full. The greater your trial the grander your opportunity of glorifying God, of manifesting that Divine strength which is made perfect in your weakness.

It is not the ordinary cares and losses of life that are the bitterest trials of the Christian. It is *the trying of his faith*. It is the long dull months and years of unanswered prayer. It is the tearful strenuous working towards an end that never seems nearer. It is

the casting in the seed broadcast, and the regular appearance of a vast crop of weeds. It is the long succession of loving deeds and persuasive words which seem utterly to fail of their effect. It is the pleaded promises and plain assurance alike in vain. It is the certain knowledge that things are going from bad to worse. It is the horrible consciousness slowly forcing its way in that all you can do counts for nothing; that the devil is stronger than you are, and is intent upon carrying on his fell work under your very eyes.

O, Faith! thou needest to be strong indeed if thou canst meet all the assaults made upon thee. Drooping art thou? No wonder, for winter frost and summer drought have alike told upon thy vitality. All the winds of heaven have blown upon thee. Thou art friendless and alone, like a song-bird in the pitiless storm, so thy wings are damp and heavy, and thou canst not soar towards heaven. Thou wast a flame upon the altar, now thou art only a flickering spark. Thou wast rich and hadst all things, now thou art poor and hast nothing.

Spirit of the living God, revive our faith! We are sorely tempted and tried, come and help us! Turn us again, O Lord God of hosts! Cause Thy face to shine, and we shall be saved!

We have referred already to certain blessings that grow out of trial. The words of James tell us what is the blessing that flows from the trying of our faith. It "worketh patience." And patience leads on to perfection.

Take the case of Abraham. The command goes forth from the Lord, and Abraham leaves his home, his friends, his native land, and goes forth on pilgrimage to a land which he knew not. An exile, leaning on a great promise; a childless man taught to believe that he would be the father of a great nation. Year after year fled past, and his faith was sorely tried. And at last God gave him all that He had promised him. The trying of his faith worked patience, and he waited till the blessing came.

See him again as the startling command comes to offer his only son for a burnt offering. The father's faith was on the rack. But the trial worked patient endurance, and the knife was in his hand, ere the angel of the Lord called unto him to forbear.

Or take the case of David: anointed by God's own prophet, sent forth to fight the giant and deliver Israel; appointed to a post of honour in the king's household, and then, driven from court, hunted from mountain to mountain, searched for by the scouts of a great army; was this God's way of bringing him to the kingdom? Yes, and God's way of teaching him that patient reliance on divine help which he so eloquently expressed in his priceless Psalms. David could say, "I waited for the Lord, and He inclined unto me, and heard my cry!"

The apostle Paul, with all his strongly marked characteristics, had so broad a nature, and so vivid an insight into the things of God, that on all subjects of Christian faith and life he has left on record some things to be highly prized. On this topic how wonderfully he dilates! "Through Christ," he says, "we have

had our access by faith into this grace wherein we stand. And let us rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but let us also glory in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, probation; and probation, hope; and hope putteth not to shame, because the love of God hath been shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Ghost which was given unto us." How beautifully this is worked out. Faith, the doorway into grace, enabling us to rejoice in tribulation; tribulation in its turn inducing a calm and patient spirit, that patient endurance earning for us the approval of God, and this gracious approval creating within us a strong hope that is not to be in vain. So we see that these things work in a divine circle: starting from faith, we go through the stages of tribulation, with its attendant graces, and at last arrive at hope, which is certainly not very far from the faith whence we started.

Let thy heart rejoice within thee, therefore, when troubles press thee sore. This is the great paradox of true religion—joy in tribulation. In the very wretchedness of the soul that suffers there shall arise a divine blessedness that else thou couldst not know.

Chester. H. WARD PRICE.

NORWEGIAN PICTURES.

WE are glad to call the attention of our readers to the latest addition to the excellent series of illustrated books of travel—the Pen and Pencil Series—published by the Religious Tract Society. It is called "Norwegian Pictures," and is from the pen of the Rev. Richard Lovett, M.A. It is accompanied by a useful map, and is illustrated by a series of excellent sketches engraved in the best style. Some of the pictures are genuine works of art. Mr. Lovett's object has been not only to give those who have not yet visited Norway, some conception of the wonderful beauty of the most accessible parts of that country, but also to refresh the memories of those who have seen some of its fairest and most famous districts. Originally he had hoped to have called the book "Scandinavian Pictures," and to have included in it both Sweden and Denmark. This, however, could not be done within the limits of this volume, yet space has been found for a most interesting chapter on Sweden and the Gota Canal. Having recently visited Scandinavia, and lingered at some of the places indicated in this volume, we can the more heartily speak of the admirable way in which Mr. Lovett has executed his task, and the accuracy of the engravings by which the letterpress is accompanied. Few gift-books of the season so well deserve a large circulation as this. There is not an uninteresting page in the volume, which is most creditable both to author and artists.

D. B. H.

SOWING BESIDE ALL WATERS.

IN the Burmese city of Rangoon, nearly fifty years ago, there lived and laboured one of the most devoted missionaries that ever continued the true apostolical succession in the Church. Adoniram Judson was a man of quenchless love for men, and of unique devotion to his Lord. One day, after having read and conversed for many hours, under the shadow of his verandah, with all the passers-by who cared to stay and listen, he had retired to the inner apartments of his house. The short Burmese sunset was over, and a sudden darkness now veiled the sky. A faint sound outside the door arrested his attention, and he threw the door open. Standing there, Mr. Judson saw his servant, who told him that he was wanted at the house of a Burmese gentleman. This was a wealthy man whom he had known for some time as a haughty, reserved, and bigoted Buddhist, who hated the Christian foreigners. It was, therefore, with some surprise that he received a summons to his house. On arriving he found that two of its inmates had been stricken with cholera. From an inner chamber came the unrestrained wailing which Eastern people use in the presence of death. He followed the sound until he was in the midst of the mourners, and saw stretched on the bed the lifeless form of a little boy. The missionary had often seen him pass with his father, and had smiled on him at the same time that he saluted his father, and once, during a conversation with his father, he had held the boy's hand softly, and murmured over him the blessings of Christian love. And now, suddenly, he saw the sweet child dead. But as he stood amongst the wailing women he heard a voice whisper in his ear: "He has gone up to the golden country, to bloom for ever amid the royal lilies of Paradise."

The words thrilled him strangely, for he had thought himself amid none but those who worshipped Buddha. Looking round he saw a middle-aged woman veiling her face with a palm-leaf fan, as if to prevent others from hearing her whispers. She then went on, in a tone pitched to the wail of the rest, as if she were joining with them: "He worshipped the true God, and trusted in the Lord our Redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ; he trusted in Him; he called and he was answered; he was weary, weary and in pain; the Lord who loved him took him home, to be a little golden lamb in His bosom for ever."

"How long since did he go?" asked the missionary.

"About an hour ago, teacher," she replied in a natural voice; then, resuming her wailing tone, she cried softly, "An hour amid the royal lilies, and his mother, his own beautiful mother, she of the starry eyes and the silken hand."

"Was he conscious?" the teacher asked.

"Yes, truly, and full of joy; and he talked only of the Lord Jesus Christ, whose face he seemed to see."

"And was it his father sent for me?"

"His father! no, no! Oh, my master! my noble master! he is going too! the agony is on him; he could not have sent for you if he would."

"But how dare *you* send for me?"

The woman gave one upward glance, and the light of a holy courage seemed to brighten on her face as she replied simply, "God was here."

Passing into the next room, the missionary saw the master of the mansion lying on a couch, gasping his last breath, and evidently beyond the possibility of recovery. His lips were stiffening, and he was unable to articulate a word. The missionary said in kind tones, "I am grieved to see you thus, my friend."

The dying man responded to the words by half raising his hand as if he would have pointed at something; but his strength was insufficient, and the wavering finger sank back. His face wore a look of anxiety as he strove again to raise his hands; finally, with some difficulty, he laid them upon his forehead, and closed his eyes.

As the missionary knew that this was the Buddhist attitude in worship, he said, "Can you in such an hour feel any joy in trusting Lord Gautama?"

The closed eyes trembled, and the heavy hands slid from the forehead in the weight of death. The missionary almost involuntarily exclaimed, "Lord Jesus, receive his spirit."

A bright smile of love and hope spread over the dying features, and, with one last effort, the finger was lifted and pointed upwards before it fell on the breast, and the soul passed into the invisible world. The watchers in the room instantly commenced their thrilling death-wail. The woman who had sent for the teacher whispered to him, saying, "You had better go now: you can do no further good, and may receive harm."

"And who are you," he asked, "that you have braved danger for yourself in bringing me here?"

"Pass on," she said, "and I will tell you."

When they stood again by the body of the child, which was now deserted, for the wailers had rushed to the master's bed, she lifted reverently the cloth which covered his little breast, and there the missionary saw a copy of the Gospel of Matthew.

"See," cried the woman, "he placed it there with his own little hand. Amai! amai-ai!" and her voice rose into an agony.

Presently she spoke again: "I was his mother's nurse. She got this book from you, sir. We thought my master had burned it, but he did not, and sometimes he read it. Do you think, teacher, that he became a true believer?"

"Tell me," replied the missionary, "to whom did he pay worship at that last moment?"

"Oh, sir! I am sure it was to the Lord Jesus. Do you think the Lord would receive him?"

"Most surely," was the reply. "Have you not read the story of the thief who was crucified with our Lord Jesus Christ?"

"Oh, yes," she said, "I read it to my little darling this morning. He was holding his mother's book in his hands when the pain smote him, and he died with it lying in his bosom. Yes, I remember well."

"The Lord Jesus Christ is just as merciful now as He was then," said the teacher.

"And so they are all saved. Oh, my Lord! it is almost too much. Oh, what joy!"

"Where did you first learn this religion, Mah-aa?" asked the missionary.

"My mistress taught me, sir, before she died. Do you not remember her coming to you for medicine for the little boy?"

"I did not know her," he replied.

"Ah, sir, she had the face of an angel. She was the master's favourite wife, and she could not ask you to the house, nor send a servant for the medicine, for her husband was most violent against your teaching; and when you had given her something for the boy you put this Gospel into her hand saying that it contained medicine for her, for she was afflicted with a fever worse than her son's, and then you lifted up your hands and prayed for her solemnly."

"I recollect her now," said the missionary. "And this was her boy?"

"Yes," said the nurse, "and the medicine cured *her*. She read the book at night while watching her baby, and then would kneel down and pray as you had done. At last one day her husband got the writing, and said he would burn it. And then she seemed to fade away for grief, and she grew weaker daily, and her face became more beautiful, and there was no holding her back, and when she came to her last hours she begged her lord to send for you, but he would not. And so she died, talking of the Lord Jesus while she could speak, and telling all around her to love Him, and worship Him only. She made me promise to teach her baby when he was old enough, and to go to you for more instruction. But I was alone, and afraid. I sometimes came as far as the big banian tree on the corner, and crawled away again, so trembling with terror that I could scarce stand upon my feet. At last I found out your servant, Ko Shmay-hay, and he promised to keep my secret; and he gave me books, and explained their meaning, and taught me how to pray, and I have been getting courage ever since. I should not much mind now if they did find me out and kill me. It would be very pleasant to go up to Paradise. I think I should even like to go to-night, if the Lord would please to take me."

Very fervent were the praises poured from that lonely missionary's heart when at length he returned home. For years he had been working where Satan had his seat, and hitherto his labour seemed all to have been in vain. But his heart was lifted up in presence of this manifest work of God. Unknown to him, and in a family from which he hoped for nothing but hostility, four persons had found "peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Fired with new ardour, he threw himself with fuller consecration into his

apostolic work, and before he died reaped in Burmah a rich Christian harvest. Thus does God steadily fulfil the purposes of His eternal love, for He "will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth." Christian workers may well take courage. The ancient promise is still radiant with celestial light: "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever."

A. SHORTMAN.

NEAR THE LORD'S TABLE.

No. VI.—"HE MADE AS THOUGH HE WOULD HAVE GONE FURTHER."

REAT sorrow can never remain long in the crowd. The noise of the world is too sore for its pain, and unhallowed eyes hurt its grief as they look on unheeding. It was no wonder, therefore, that the two disciples (Luke xxiv. 13) should leave Jerusalem on the afternoon of the first Christian Sabbath, and take a solitary journey towards a quiet country village. The Christ from whom they had expected so much had died a cursed death: shame and failure, scorn and envy, had crowded around His cross, and left the hearts of His disciples

> "More desolate, more dreary cold
> Than a forsaken bird's-nest filled with snow
> 'Mid its own bush of leafless eglantine."

To make the pain of loss and the burden of disappointment more heavy and intense, wild rumours had been floating about since early morning. It was evil enough for Him to be put to death as He was; but to have idle tales and foolish gossip profaning His grave that was too hard to bear. So they left Jerusalem on that summer afternoon; but they could not leave the sorrows of Christ behind them. Human life can never pass out of sight of Calvary. Amid all the troublous seas of time the Cross can never be hidden from the most bewildered mariner; and when the sea is calmest the eternal shadow lies mournfully across the sunlit waves. The quiet road leading to Emmaus, and the gentle beauty of summer, could not make them forget the Divine Sorrows. Indeed, it seemed as if the peaceful meadows and the glad hills were haunted by sad reminiscences of the dead Christ. Cornfields ripe unto harvest—lilies peeping here and there in the open fields—the occasional fig tree standing by the roadside—the common things of nature about which He had spoken so well—seemed now all to be speaking about Him.

So they passed along the road, keeping their sorrow quiet by talking about it, when they were overtaken by a stranger. Instead of passing them as they wished him to do—for grief does not like to look on a strange face—he took their step, and asked them the

subject of their conversation. "And they stood still, looking sad," as a kindly hint that his presence was an intrusion; but he did not mean to be so easily dispensed with. From being a mere passing stranger he soon became an interesting teacher, and the interesting teacher became a friendly companion. As they came to the end of their journey the day was drawing to a close, and the peace of evening was settling down upon hill and dale. Their hearts were not now so restless and troubled; an unconscious calm had passed over their spirits. But they felt that this peacefulness all came from the strange presence; and with his going away the old storm and confusion would return once more, and the waves of grief would break upon the shore more wildly and more darkly than ever. He was evidently bent on going further; but they must have him to remain with them, and partake of their evening meal. At last he yielded to their "sweet constraint," and went in.

It is the genius of Divine Love to make itself indispensable to the human heart, so that when it goes away there is an affectionate and tender cry—"When wilt thou come back again? The time will drag heavily, and sunny days will be cheerless and cold, until thou returnest." God makes room for Himself in the soul, which none can fill but Him. There was always a vacant chair in one house at Bethany when Jesus was away: whoever sat in it only made it seem the more vacant. Martha was troubled because the Master was not there to be troubled about; Mary had to live on the memories of Divine words and gentle looks; Lazarus could not help gazing wistfully now and again on the absence which was always present. Christ has a vacant chair in thousands of homes to-day: whenever He goes away there is grief and loss. And the door is never shut day or night; the lamp of prayer is never taken from the window, until He returns and goes in to tarry with them once more.

There is a sublime reserve in the Divine Love. Christ joined Himself to the two disciples when they did not want Him; but at the end of the journey He would have not remained if they could do without Him. God is a stranger to every life in its early experiences; but there comes a day when the soul has to cry after Him, or else He will go further. The Almighty has a very delicate touch in dealing with the free choice of man. He attracts, but does not break; He helps, but does not compel. "Forced hallelujahs" would make only a "wearisome eternity." Every song in heaven is but the melodious blossoming of free will. "Behold, I stand at the door:"—yea, Lord; and the hand which bears the worlds on its palm, and when wounded broke the iron gates of death in fragments, can surely throw wide open the frail and shattered door of a sinful heart? But, no: the Saviour cannot cross the threshold of a finite soul unless some wandering prayer has crossed the same threshold on its way out to seek God. "Abide with us."

The sun makes a flower beautiful by the most affectionate wooing. The roses of June are not sweet by force, but by gentleness of ministry. Fragrant leaves and glowing petals are not showered

down in a whirl of sunbeams, and put on by a deft mechanism. During the winter the seed-life has grown in its own heart all the essences of beauty; they only require the charmed touch of May to bring them out into their full glory. So is every soul allowed by the Divine Love to grow in its own personal loveliness, and eternity will be happy with the joy of free progress.

It is the reserve of the Divine Love not to outstay its welcome. By affording free play to the motions of the heart, love is increased and sanctified. The child that oftenest loses the Father's face may one day lie nearest to the Father's heart. "He made as though He would have gone further." He belonged more to them after they constrained Him to stay. By the loving ordinance of God Himself, we make Him more and more our God every time our prayer keeps Him from going away. The man who has had the hardest struggle in wrestling with the angel is the man who will carry most blessings away at break of day. Sad, sad is the day when Christ has outstayed His welcome: "and they began to pray Him to depart out of their coasts." Whatever righteous loss His presence may have incurred, will be nothing to the loss His absence will mean.

In the present day the road leading out from Jerusalem to Emmaus is barren and desolate for the first few miles, but as the road draws near Emmaus it becomes more fresh and beautiful. The village is situated on the high slope of the hills, and looks down on a glen narrow and deep, through which a little brook runs, surrounded, in April, with the red and white flowers of the almond trees. The way up the hillside passes between terraces of vines and olive trees, so that the landscape in early summer becomes a little home of nature's gentle and fair glory.

Is it not always so? When the soul leaves the city of the cross, bearing with it the sorrows of Christ, the road is dreary and lonesome. But He is never far away from those who are troubled about Him. He overtakes us on our pilgrimage; and the shining Christ, who is a stranger outside, helps the sorrow-stricken Christ who is an inmate of the heart. As He opens out the great meanings of God's providence, as He reads to us the Bible in a way we had never read it before, as we see the glory of eternal counsels flashing through the evil gloom of Calvary, as we see the everlasting doors wide open to receive the King of Glory—the road becomes lighter, and springtide gathers round the close of the journey like the smile of God. We walk among the almond blossoms, we pass beneath the shade of olive and vine, until when we stand near our house of rest, we dare not enter in without the Divine Stranger. Without Him the earth would now be darker than ever. We lost Him at Jerusalem, and that was a heavy loss; we forsook Him when He wanted us to stay. But to lose Him at Emmaus—that must never be. We constrain Him to tarry, though He would go further. He must come in; He must break the bread. And He will come, for He can never pass by a heart's prayer.

Hull. H. ELVET LEWIS.

JAMES HERBERT'S DIARY;

Or, Experiences with Seekers after God.

By the Rev. ROBERT TUCK, B.A., Author of "Netley Independent Chapel," "Links Wanted," &c.

IX.—STABLISHING IN THE FAITH.

ERBERT belonged to a ministers' Fraternal Society, whose members met once a month to chat and dine together at each other's houses. On one occasion they assembled at old Mr. Short's, and at the time he had a friend staying with him who had been actively engaged in revival services. Mr. Short had been minister of a large church for many years, but had now retired, and lived in a commodious, though old-fashioned, house, looking pleasantly over a wide, open heath.

Usually the conversation was somewhat desultory at these gatherings, but the presence of the well-known revivalist gave it a very direct character on this occasion. A casual remark sent the visitor off into an account of the "work" with which he had been recently associated, which seemed, however, to "aggravate" rather than to "astonish" some of the company.

John Frost let out the feeling when he rather abruptly said, "Don't you think, sir, there is grave danger of our *manufacturing* religious emotion?"

"I don't see the danger in our meetings," replied the visitor; "but if there were the danger the good would quite outweigh it. We must get the people converted, and all means are good, if only we may gain some."

"Perhaps we are not fully agreed as to what we mean by 'conversion,'" Mr. Frost replied. "You seem to speak of it as if it were the great end of Christian labour. I think of it as only the initial stage of the Christian life. You think a man is saved when he can say he believes; I regard him as saved only when he is freed from every bondage of corruption, and translated into the glorious liberty of righteousness which the children of God know. You regard the Divine change of conversion as the supreme thing to secure; I look upon the regeneration of the will, by the Divine Spirit, as the hopeful beginning of the regeneration of the life under the same Divine Spirit."

Here Herbert joined in. He said, "My anxiety about revival services and special missions has always been that, as religious agencies outside our regular church organisations, any good done through them cannot be followed up, watched, nourished into strength, guided to right expressions. My experience is, that persons converted at these special services are started in their Christian career with a prejudice against our churches, and a more or less clearly recognised idea that there is more of the grace of God outside than inside the churches. A painfully small propor-

tion of those converted in revival times ever unite with the churches; and the disposition of such persons is to get their own very imperfect religious experience simply repeated in others."

"I fear you have told the truth, though the unwelcome truth," said Mr. Short. "Revivalism only 'propagates' after its kind," and I am obliged, in a review of a long life, to admit that it is a very weak kind. Many years ago, when I settled at Weston, I learned how weak it is. My predecessor had been a revivalist, and by exciting services he had added over one hundred names to the church roll. My first duty, with my deacons, was to examine the roll, and eighty of the names had to be struck off, as nobody knew the parties, or could hear what had become of them. I value highly the revival method as an auxiliary to church work, and look upon it as a Divine mode of quickening and renewing churches in times of depression; but it is supremely important that revivals should be closely connected with the churches, so that the young life may be instructed and guided, and good emotion get settled into good life principle."

"If we were thoroughly honest and straightforward," said John Frost, "should we not say that those converted in revivals do not come into our churches, because they *do not like instruction;* they do not want to be made to think: born in 'sentiment,' they would rather live on 'sentiment'; their first breath was taken in a heated emotional atmosphere, and they feel as if they could breathe most freely in the same bad air?"

"You remind me," Herbert replied, "of a friend of mine, who told me that for years he had watched and noted the character and stability, and Christian usefulness of the young people who had joined his church, and he found these things exactly depended on their intelligent acquaintance with the New Testament. But I should like to ask the brethren, apart from the treatment of these revival-converted ones, what plans they adopt for fostering the young life in the 'seekers' who are connected with our congregations, or become church members? I have found that unless we are very watchful and wise in retaining our influence over them, the young people get an idea that all is done when they are admitted as members; the fact of their being Christians is sealed—it is all right, and they need not trouble any more. And in such cases it must really be all *wrong*, and the heedless ones must be very near to the 'snare of the devil.'"

"I am not sure," remarked Arthur Cole, "whether we, as ministers, have not fallen into the same error as the young people. We talk as if everything was done, and our work ended, when the 'seekers' were safe in the church. I was startled some time ago, when pleading with a man about the duty of uniting with God's people, by his almost rough reply, 'Look here, Mr. Cole, what *good is it* to join the church?' I should like to have been able to answer, 'This good, my friend: there all good purposes and desires will be nourished into strength, and directed in their expressions; Christian truths will be taught you, and Christian principles estab-

lished in you.' But, thinking of what church life actually is, I could not use such words."

The visitor was somewhat roused by the tone which the conversation had taken. He warmly vindicated the revivalists from the charge of neglecting their converts; pleaded that spiritual instruction was more important than intellectual; argued that if God truly converted a man He would be sure to keep him, and to "perfect that which concerned him;" and made a good point by showing that without the revival movement the churches would become cold, careless, and lifeless, satisfied with merely external prosperities, and heedless of their true spiritual and evangelical mission.

The conversation greatly interested Herbert, and his thoughts about it were written in his diary that night.

"Every pastor ought to be an *Evangelist*. I see that clearly. It is our work to arouse anxiety, to produce conviction of sin, to set men seeking salvation, to declare such aspects of truth as are calculated to alarm and humble, to make all within our reach cry out and say, 'Men and brethren, what must we do to be saved?' No minister can possibly be found faithful unless he directly aims at 'conversion,' and uses all possible means for arousing religious enquiries and anxieties. No minister can be called 'wise' who is unwilling to use *emotional* agencies in the evangelistic department of his work. We get from God very much what we really desire, and really seek. And so many churches and pastors know nothing about conversions, simply because they do not value them, do not pray for them, do not work for them, do not set themselves in the way of them, and will not adopt the methods for obtaining them which God in these times is seen to bless.

"But I am even more sure that the evangelists ought to be *pastors*. Converts need 'stablishing in the faith;' and if that were a more present aim to our ministers, there would be little call for special young Christians' meetings, because the ordinary Sabbath instruction from the pulpit would bear directly on the spiritual culture. Some years since I admitted at one church meeting twelve persons, eight of whom were just beginning the Christian life, and their constant presence in my thoughts gave tone and point and adaption to my prayers and preaching for some months after. The gravest trouble I have with myself is that, if I do not carefully watch, I fall back into preaching things in which *I am interested*, instead of things directly designed to bear on the condition, feelings, and needs of the very individuals I am to address. I ought to be a preacher of the truth, but I ought, much more, to be the teacher of a precise people.

"I have tried young Christians' classes, and special meetings of various kinds; but I cannot say that I am satisfied with them, or regard them very hopefully. The more excellent way, I believe, is to increase the direct and practical efficiency of our ministry. If we would only leave Science, and Philosophy, and Modern Scepticism alone, and just give our whole hearts and powers to *soul-culture*, we should soon see the signs of good result in the 'stablishing' of our

people's faith, and the lifting of their whole lives into a higher plane. And if something else must be done, then I say, let us make our *Church Meetings* great spiritual forces—the joy-times, the power-times, of our ministerial history.

"Of this I am very sure—there need be no revivalism outside our churches, if only the true soul of revivalism were nourished within them. To me the success of special missions—nay, the very demand for them—is a Christ-message, saying,—'I have somewhat against thee: thou hast left thy first love.'"

MEET FOR THE MASTER'S SERVICE.

"I DON'T see that what you've been saying applies to me. I am perfectly aware that, for all reasons, a life of strict morality is the best; and I believe I act up to that creed. My business relations are all honourable; I never drive a hard bargain; I owe no man anything; I endeavour to educate my children in a manner calculated to make them useful, as well as prosperous members of society. And if I can see them well-established and following in my footsteps, I shall lie down without a regret when my time comes. Yet you tell me I lack something."

The man's tone was far from flippant, nor did it suggest the self-complacent "God, I thank Thee," of the Pharisee, confident in the payment of tithes, and the rigid observance of outward ceremonial; it was expressive rather of a conscious integrity like that of the young ruler, who, having kept the commandments and loved his neighbour as himself from his youth up, asked with incredulous candour, "What lack I yet?"

But he was not a praying man. He knew nothing of that daily renewal of grace which is the Christian's strength, and the friend to whom these words were addressed had been urging upon him the need of a deeper soil for the immortal soul to strike its roots into—a firmer foundation for his building.

They had often talked so before, but even now he could not see the need. The whole bent of his mind was towards integrity. A dishonourable action never suggested itself to him; and pardon—grace—seemed empty words.

"All very well to speak of grace to those in whom early associations had tended to form evil habits," he argued. "They needed arousing—converting, if you would, to a better life. Talk of pardon to those whose lives were often stained with sin; but surely one whose entire conduct had run in the lines of uprightness and justice would have little laid to his charge at the day of reckoning."

So they shook hands and parted, and the friend went his way, with a sigh to think that one so capable of good service should yet be outside the kingdom.

A couple of months later, disease had seized that man's frame. Strength had forsaken him, and anxious faces had watched through many a long night by his bedside.

"What lack I yet?" was the watchword with which he still strove to comfort himself.

Why tremble, though on the very verge of the grave? But the stout heart had departed with health, and he was willing to lie and listen, as his wife read from the neglected book of grace.

His life was spared, and still he had not surrendered.

"Oh! if only he could be brought to see it now!" was his wife's cry, as she daily watched the signs of returning health; "now, whilst his heart is soft! So good and true as he is, he feels no need of Christ."

"But Christ has need of him," returned the friend. "*As a Jew*, Saul of Tarsus lacked nothing; although he lacked all, because he had not found the Messiah; but was it not his very position, as an irreproachable character and a scholar, that rendered him so meet to be a 'chosen vessel' when he became obedient to the heavenly vision?"

The friend left, with a promise to call again, and next evening found him once more conversing upon the old theme with the convalescent man.

"I have always lived in accordance with the dictates of conscience, so far as my light would allow," he still persisted; "and I do not see much use in all this talk about repentance and conversion."

"Touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless, concerning zeal ——"

"No;" the sick man stopped him, "not 'persecuting the church,'" he said. "I never say a word *against* religion."

The friend tried again. "You have limited yourself to purely temporal affairs," he said. "A 'young ruler' rather than a Saul. 'All these have I kept from my youth up. What lack I yet?'"

"What lack I yet?" he repeated—the old question to which he had been trying to get an answer since first sickness broke down his self-sufficiency. "I have met with men *who professed religion*, far less honourable, and far harder to deal with," he added.

"Granted," returned the friend. "Did you never know a tree, professing to be a rose, with such a miserable show of bloom on it as to be a veritable disgrace to its name?"

"I don't see the point."

"You have come across miserable Christians who disgraced the name they bore. Did it ever occur to you that, side by side with them, *you* might rear a tree which would in every way do credit to its name and trainer? There was a certain man named Ananias, who made a false pretence of religion; but none of the sap from the true vine was flowing in his veins, and his fruit decayed and fell. There was one Saul of Tarsus, whose perfectly moral life and scholarly education rendered him supremely fit to be the

ambassador of Christ to all men, from the impotent beggar to the representative of Cæsar."

"Just so; but there was need of conversion in his case. Saul the persecutor—Paul the apostle. I *can't* conscientiously say I have much to repent of."

"Gently! I don't hear much of *repentance*, as you are using the word, in Saul's conversion."

"What! you an orthodox man, and dare to assert that one of the murderers of Stephen had nothing to repent of."

"Recall Saul's position as a Jew. 'Persecuting this way to the death,' was a matter of conscience with him. He *did* repent—so much mistaken zeal, so much lost time; but only sin *against conscience* demands the kind of repentance to which you allude."

"Why did Christ send the young ruler away, then? I don't suppose he had much to repent of, according to your theory."

"And according to the Master's judgment on him he was 'not far from the kingdom.' But Christ did not *send* him away. He *lacked* something; and I like to think that the young man was not alone in going away sorrowful. The Master must have sorrowed, too, that one who had so much sterling worth of character to devote to His service, should yet have turned back."

"What about 'They that are whole need not a physician'?"

"What about 'Ye are the light of the world'? That young ruler's lack was large-heartedness. He was living to himself; and you, my friend, are doing the same. You tacitly acknowledge Christianity to be the best rule of life, yet by refraining from making it a personal matter, and by withholding your public testimony to its saving power, you are hiding your light under a bushel—you, of whom all men speak highly, and who are, therefore, capable of bearing such a grand witness for Christ. You are aware of the evil influence exerted upon the world by *bad* Christians. Has it never struck you that the best remedy is *an increased number of good samples;* and that none are better fitted to shine as such than the morally strong?"

He could not see it then; but he said "Amen" to his friend's prayer that the light "above the brightness of the sun" might shine upon his path, and he asked him to come again.

It was evident that he was kicking against the pricks; but when next his friend called, that prayer had been answered. It had dawned upon him that the soldier of the cross is none the better for having served in the ranks of the enemy, and that God has room in His church for business men—as well as preachers and evangelists—whose stern protest against fraud and violence, whose strict adherence to truth and integrity, and, above all, whose gentleness and charity, shall adorn the religion they profess, and prove its worth to those who, through the carelessness of its so-called adherents, have come to pronounce it hypocrisy and cant.

And he had asked the question—"Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?"

FLORENCE E. BURCH.

OUR LIBRARY TABLE.

THE *Cambridgeshire Congregational Magazine* is a capital pennyworth, well edited by the Rev. A. W. Johnstone, of Fowlmere. It is published by J. Crampton, Sawston.

We are glad to receive another volume of the *Biblical Treasury*, from the office of the Sunday School Union. This series of exposition and help should prove invaluable to Sunday School Teachers. The present volume lays a large number of writers under contribution, and by their help presents an excellent companion to the Books of Kings, Chronicles, and Ezra.

In Anno Domini; or a glimpse at the World into which Messias was born, by Rev. J. D. Craig Houston, D.D., minister of the Presbyterian Church, Hyde Park, Belfast, gives us, in a small compass, much interesting information by which we can vividly realize the state of the world at the time of Christ's birth. It is published by the Religious Tract Society, and the price is 2s. 6d. It should be of real help to those who, as the author says, are "obliged to content themselves with the rivulet, rather than the river."

The Preacher's Commentary on the Book of Samuel, by the Rev. W. Harris, is another volume of the *Homiletical Commentary on the Old Testament*, in course of preparation by various authors. Like its predecessors it is characterized by much thoroughness, and very careful and judicious arrangement. The Critical and Expository Notes on each chapter are carefully prepared; the Homiletics on verses and paragraphs are thoughtful and terse; while the Outlines and Suggestive Comments are most interesting and instructive. The volume cannot but prove valuable to the student, and a very useful help to pulpit preparation. It is published by R. D. Dickinson.

The Great Cloud of Witnesses is a second series of excellent Expository Lectures, by Rev. W. Landels, D.D., on faith and its victories, illustrated by those who, from the time of Joshua to that of David, lived the life of faith. It is published by the Religious Tract Society, price 4s. From the same publishers we have received *Old Highways in China*, by Mrs. Williamson. In this well got up and illustrated volume we have an interesting account of everyday life in North China. The interest of English readers in mission work in China should be deepened by this well written book.

Most heartily do we commend *The Alternatives of Faith and Unbelief*, by the Rev. C. Stanford, D.D. Price 1s. 6d. Published by the Religious Tract Society. This short study on a great subject is admirable alike in purpose and execution. The author glances at the alternative faith which unbelief implies and necessitates, and then at its consequences. Few books are more suited for wide distribution among young men, and we trust it will receive the circulation it deserves. We have also received *From Calvary to Olivet*, by the same author, and from the same publishers. This volume of homilies is marked by all the quiet beauty and suggestiveness which characterize Dr. Stanford's works.

Kate's Mother, by Ellen Hodgson, is published by Hodder and Stoughton. This nicely written story, from the pen of a well-known Christian worker in Liverpool, deals with life in some of its lowliest aspects, depicting its joys and sorrows, its losses and gains. The heroine, a Christian mother, casts all her care on the Great Care-bearer, and He does not disappoint her. Her children learn "to fight the good fight," and she herself realizes the joy of those parents whose offspring rise to call them "blessed." *Kate's Mother* may be profitably read during the winter months at "Mothers' Meetings."

We are glad to receive a copy of the second edition of Dr. Fairbairn's volume entitled *The City of God*. This book (published by Hodder & Stoughton) stands in the forefront among the best theological literature of the age. In it all the problems of present-day theology are treated with candour and generous sympathy. Dr. Fairbairn starts by demonstrating the relations between Theism and Science, and then passes on to discuss Religion and Man. The second part treats of God and Israel, and includes a fine analysis of the Book of Job. The third part is taken up with Christological studies, and is full of clever and strong thinking. In the last part we come to the Quest of the Chief Good, and to a final discussion of the ideal City of God. No one of average ability can read it without having his religious conception much broadened and strengthened.

THE TEACHERS' PAGE.

THE three lessons for December are taken from the book of the prophet Isaiah, who is properly called the "Evangelical prophet." They are Isa. i. 1-18, liii., and lv., and all three are very familiar passages.

As much of the point and force of these prophecies depend upon knowledge of the condition of society, and of the national anxieties, in the period when they were delivered, teachers should carefully study the reigns during which Isaiah lived. The modern notion that there were *two* Isaiahs should be weighed, and the reasons for the opinion fairly estimated; but it should be seen that, as prophecies, the latter part of the book may have been composed long before the events of which it treats. Dr. S. G. Green, while pleading for the unity of the book, wisely says, "If the latter part is by a 'great unknown' of the Babylonian period, the inspiration and authority of the book would still remain. There would, in fact, be *two* 'evangelical prophets,' one of the Assyrian the other of the Babylonian era; and the fountain of consolation for the church of all time, which here runs so deep and full, would have a double instead of a single source."

The four kings under whom Isaiah prophesied were Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. The fall of Samaria filled Judah with alarm. The same fate seemed impending for them. Isaiah has to plead that heart-return to God and righteousness alone could preserve the nation. He pleads, for the most part, with deaf ears and hardened hearts. So he turns to the elect remnant, before whom is the fate of sharing in the coming captivity, cheers them with the promise of restoration, and fills them with the great hope of the future spiritual kingdom to be founded in righteousness by Messiah, the suffering prince.

This general idea of the book will help to give point to the teachings from these particular lessons. But a little meditative attention to the three subjects together, will bring to view the fact that we have here illustrated

THE THREE ESSENTIALS OF SALVATION.

The prophet endeavours to produce *conviction of sin*, ch. i.; he declares the provision of *an atonement for sin*, ch. liii.; on the basis of the atonement he proclaims *God's forgiveness*, and calls on whosoever will to *come and seek*, without money and without price, ch. lv. This is the "old, old Gospel story."

I. *Conviction of Sin.*—The guilt, misery, and hopeless helplessness of men are forcibly illustrated in the figures of this chapter. See the guilt of ingratitude in the figure of the ox and the ass (ver. 3), who do in some sense repay their owner's kindness; the guilt of *formalism*, in the satire on religious ceremonies out of which all heart, all spiritual meaning, had gone (ver. 11-15); the direct charges of iniquity and wilful transgression and violation of all the laws of truth and charity, in ver. 16, 17.

See the misery into which guilt brings, in the figures of the ruined garden lodge (ver. 8); and the hopeless helplessness in the bruised condition, the diseased state, so forcibly described in ver. 5, 6.

Still, the first thing in salvation is *due convincement of sin.* We should find out how God's spirit will help us to produce such conviction in the children, for Christ will never be welcomed as a *Saviour* until we feel that, as sinners, we need HIM.

II. *Atonement for Sin* —It is usual to see in Isa. liii. a vivid picture of a *suffering* Saviour, but we may as clearly see that the picture is of a Saviour *by substitution.* "The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." While avoiding coarse and harshly legal ideas of substitution, we should make the deep spiritual truth of it clear, and so gain the power to plead with the children on the ground that Jesus died for them; bearing even *their sins* in His own body on the tree. We have learned to love these lines:—

"I cannot understand the woe which Thou wast pleased to bear;
O, Dying Lamb! I do but know that *all my sins were there.*"

III. *Proclamation of God's forgiveness to all who seek* (Isa. lv.)—The hindrances in God's way, and in our way, are taken out of the way; and

"Jesus's blood, through earth and skies,
Mercy, free boundless mercy cries."

We parents, we teachers, have to become prophets, like Isaiah; we ministers of reconciliation, as though God did beseech by us, we have to pray, in Christ's stead, be reconciled to God.

So we end our year of studies for and with the children. Our last words are the "Old, Old Story." R. TUCK.

THE YOUNG FOLKS' CORNER.

THE LORD'S MONEY.

HERE is something for the boys and girls to think about when they put money in the contribution box. The incident is told by Mrs. M. E. Sangster in the *Christian Giver*:—

"Bertie, Bertie, isn't this a shame?" cried little Caspar Hall, as he held up a silver quarter for his older brother Jim to look at.

It was a bright quarter, and at first sight there was nothing the matter with it, but closer inspection showed that it had been bored, and the hole had afterwards been carefully filled up.

"They wouldn't take it where I bought my slate," said Caspar ruefully, "and then I tried to pass it at the candy shop, and the lady shook her head, and when I offered it to the conductor of the car he was quite cross, and asked me if I didn't know how to read. When I said, 'Yes, of course I did,' he pointed to a notice in big letters, 'No mutilated coin received here.' What shall I do with it?" finished the little fellow with a sigh.

"You have no idea who gave it to you, have you, Caspar?" said Bertie.

"Not the least. It is part of the change I had from Uncle John's Christmas gift to me."

"Well, you must be sharper next time. Now, if I were you, I would put it into the missionary box. The Society will work it off somehow."

"But I don't want to put a whole quarter in the box."

"It is not a whole quarter, Casp; it's a quarter that's had a hole in it. Nobody'll take it from you. You may just as well get rid of it in that way as any other."

Bertie and Caspar Hall were in their father's library when this conversation took place. They thought themselves alone. But, just on the other side of a curtain which divided the room from the parlour, their little cousin Ethel was sitting. As Caspar moved towards the place where the family missionary box stood in plain sight, Ethel drew the curtain aside and spoke to him.

"Boys," she said, "I did not mean to listen, but I could not help overhearing you, and Caspar, dear, don't drop that quarter into the box, please."

"Why not, Ethel?"

"The Lord's money goes into that box."

Bertie looked up from his Latin grammar to meet the glowing face of the little girl. Her eyes were shining, and her lip quivered a little, but she spoke gravely. "It was the lamb without blemish, don't you know, that the Hebrews were to offer to the Lord? If you saw Jesus here in this room, you wouldn't like to say, 'I give this to Thee, because nobody else will have it.' It was gold, frankincense and myrrh the wise men offered the infant Jesus."

The boys drew nearer Ethel. She went on: "It isn't much we can give to Him who gave Himself to us, but I believe we ought to give Him our best, and what costs us something. Excuse me, but it seems mean to drop a battered coin into God's treasury just to get it out of sight."

Caspar and Bertie agreed with Ethel. They were about to do wrong for want of thought. Are there no older people who should remember that the Lord's money ought to be perfect and of our best?

TO OUR READERS.

As the writer's connection with the CONGREGATIONAL MAGAZINE ceases with the present number, he takes this opportunity of tendering his cordial thanks to all with whom he has come into pleasant contact through its pages. He is glad to know that the Magazine has an increased circulation, and that it has become a source of income to the Church-Aid and Home Missionary Society.

With the January number an improved series will be commenced, under the editorial care of the Rev. Andrew Mearns. Several important alterations are contemplated, and every effort will be made to render the Magazine increasingly useful to the churches. A copy of the programme for the new volume accompanies this number.

D. BURFORD HOOKE.